



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Monthly Retail Trade

Sales and Inventories

January 1997

BR/97-1
Issued March 1997

INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. —The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales and inventories estimates will be revised based on the results of the 1995 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised estimates for January 1993 through February 1997 are scheduled for release the week of April 28, 1997. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

Sales. Total sales for all retail stores in the United States during January 1997 were an estimated \$211.5 billion. These estimates were adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. The month-to-month percentage change from December 1996 sales was an estimated +1.5 (± 0.8) percent, while the year-to-year change from January 1996 was an estimated +6.2 (± 0.9) percent.

Excluding the automotive group, the January sales were +1.4 (± 0.7) percent when compared to the December 1996 sales, while the change from January 1996 was +6.1 (± 0.7) percent.

The year-to-year changes for the major kinds of business ranged from the building materials group, which were +10.3 (± 3.5) percent, to the food group stores, which were +3.0 (± 2.0) percent.

Inventories. After adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, total retail inventories in stores and warehouses servicing retail establishments were an estimated \$312.2 billion at the end of January. The month-to-month percentage change from December inventories was an estimated -0.5 (± 0.3) percent and was an estimated 2.7 (± 0.9) percent above January 1996.

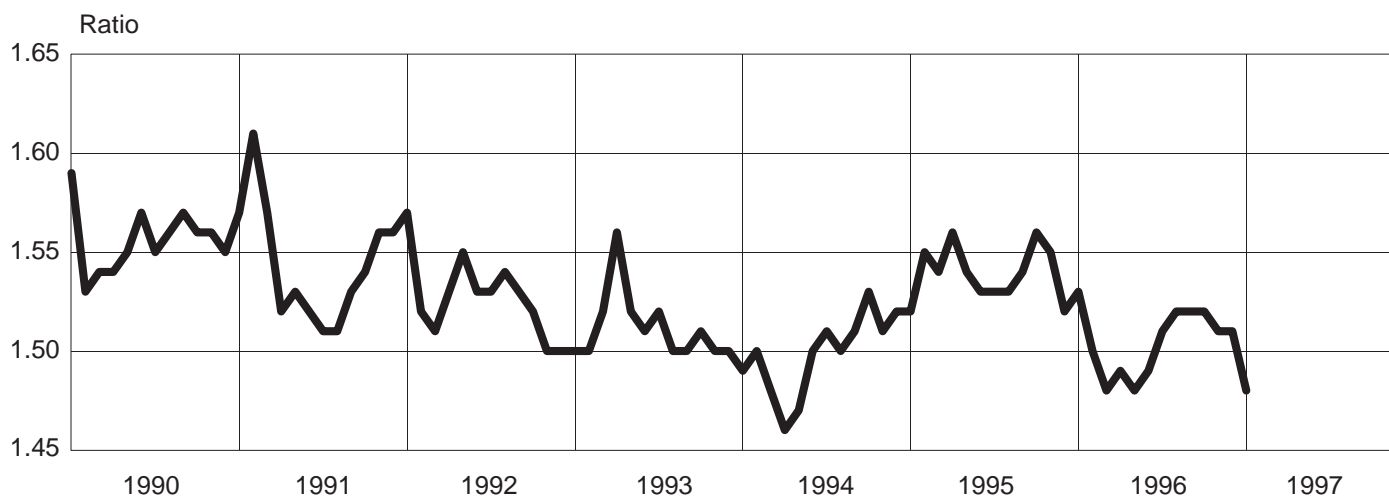
For durable goods stores the percentage change from December was -1.0 (± 0.4) percent, while the change from January 1996 was +2.9 (± 1.4) percent. For nondurable goods stores, the month-to-month change from December was virtually unchanged, +0.03 (± 0.2) percent, while the year-to-year change from January 1996 was +2.5 (± 0.6) percent.

The total inventories/sales ratio for January based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.48, down .05 from January a year ago.

Figure 1.

Retail Inventories/Sales Ratios: January 1990 – January 1997

(Seasonally adjusted, but not adjusted for price changes)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is in appendix B.

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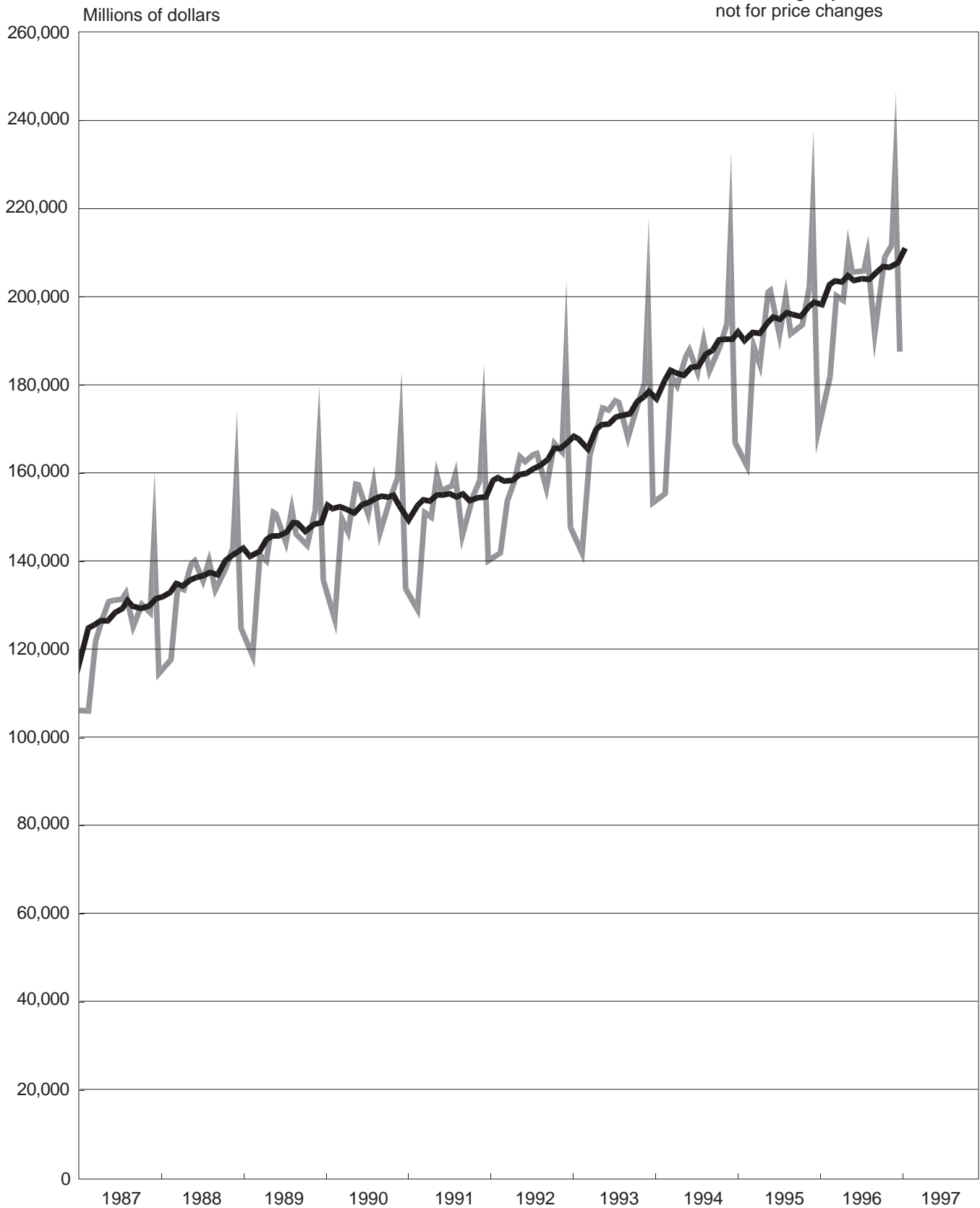
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Figure 2.

**Estimated Monthly Retail Sales:
January 1987 – January 1997**

— Unadjusted
— Adjusted for seasonal, holiday,
and trading-day differences, but
not for price changes



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997	1996												Total 12 mos.	
		Jan. ^P	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1996	1995
	Unadjusted															
	Retail sales, total	187,555	174,839	181,901	201,334	200,293	215,410	206,292	206,440	214,001	197,365	209,238	211,873	246,423	2,465,409	2,340,817
	Total (excl. automotive group)	141,044	131,644	134,156	147,447	148,020	159,154	153,228	153,331	160,469	147,999	157,133	165,581	202,020	1,860,182	1,780,193
	Durable goods, total	75,016	69,646	74,500	83,755	84,116	91,386	87,092	87,183	88,511	81,618	85,967	81,957	91,505	907,236	936,212
52	Building materials group stores	8,746	7,983	8,151	9,671	11,765	13,143	12,715	12,571	12,172	11,508	12,181	10,797	10,211	132,868	124,626
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	7,939	7,232	7,374	8,622	10,113	11,254	10,881	11,062	10,706	10,044	10,737	9,652	8,913	116,590	109,347
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	6,887	6,246	6,440	7,574	8,835	9,850	9,535	9,778	9,474	8,916	9,498	8,419	7,623	102,188	95,649
525	Hardware stores	1,052	986	934	1,048	1,278	1,404	1,346	1,284	1,232	1,128	1,239	1,233	1,290	14,402	13,698
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	46,511	43,195	47,745	53,887	52,273	56,256	53,064	53,109	53,532	49,366	52,105	46,292	44,403	605,227	560,624
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	43,800	40,538	45,079	50,884	49,153	52,991	49,851	49,779	50,209	46,324	48,763	43,286	41,573	568,430	525,918
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	41,925	38,888	43,115	48,355	46,129	49,679	46,629	46,833	46,948	43,922	46,404	41,244	39,630	537,776	498,166
551	Motor vehicle dealers, new & used	38,536	35,894	39,527	44,162	42,125	45,844	43,001	43,179	43,362	40,637	42,810	37,921	36,568	495,030	458,985
553	Auto & home supply stores	2,711	2,657	2,666	3,003	3,120	3,265	3,213	3,330	3,323	3,042	3,342	3,006	2,830	36,797	34,706
57	Furniture group stores	10,621	10,153	9,891	10,883	10,382	10,886	10,752	10,927	11,596	10,990	11,493	12,798	16,049	136,800	129,923
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,286	4,826	4,826	5,420	5,273	5,562	5,452	5,661	5,872	5,518	5,905	6,455	6,849	67,619	64,684
5712	Furniture stores	3,276	2,946	3,006	3,305	3,147	3,276	3,196	3,238	3,381	3,213	3,343	3,664	3,682	39,397	38,109
5713	Floor covering stores	921	826	762	902	975	989	988	1,078	1,047	978	1,065	993	998	11,601	11,011
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,566	4,531	4,247	4,583	4,309	4,491	4,468	4,471	4,855	4,663	4,798	5,405	7,564	58,385	54,655
5722	Household appliance stores	679	636	593	664	676	721	718	720	758	692	727	803	937	8,645	8,790
5731,34	Radio, TV and computer stores	3,887	3,895	3,654	3,919	3,633	3,770	3,750	3,751	4,097	3,971	4,071	4,602	6,627	49,740	45,865
5941	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	1,517	1,441	1,425	1,799	1,863	1,948	2,087	2,026	2,207	1,776	1,624	1,803	3,001	23,000	20,980
5942	Book stores	1,339	1,243	687	673	679	773	758	710	1,227	934	804	807	1,421	10,716	10,264
5944	Jewelry stores	1,137	1,072	1,479	1,355	1,400	1,822	1,454	1,423	1,530	1,381	1,518	1,915	4,673	21,022	19,351
	Nondurable goods, total	112,539	105,193	107,401	117,579	116,177	124,024	119,200	119,257	125,490	115,747	123,271	129,916	154,918	1,458,173	1,404,605
53	General merchandise group stores	20,539	18,514	20,413	23,129	23,214	25,608	24,576	23,410	26,129	23,553	25,669	30,719	44,492	309,426	296,904
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	15,791	14,144	15,706	17,949	18,083	19,844	18,962	18,019	20,395	18,382	19,917	24,305	35,813	241,519	230,883
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	15,997	14,413	16,037	18,326	18,465	20,224	19,308	18,341	20,777	18,714	20,277	24,767	36,333	245,982	234,974
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	3,116	2,803	3,636	4,190	4,103	4,441	4,017	3,714	4,621	4,309	4,525	5,768	9,304	55,431	54,289
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	10,309	9,231	9,906	11,179	11,375	12,618	12,256	11,675	12,680	11,363	12,396	14,793	20,523	149,995	139,392
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	2,572	2,379	2,495	2,957	2,987	3,165	3,035	2,952	3,476	3,042	3,356	4,206	6,506	40,556	41,293
533	Variety stores	540	458	555	628	634	698	644	639	691	610	702	768	1,204	8,231	7,668
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	4,208	3,912	4,152	4,552	4,497	5,066	4,970	4,752	5,043	4,561	5,050	5,646	7,475	59,676	58,353
54	Food group stores	35,306	33,681	32,674	35,079	34,108	36,427	35,382	36,363	36,800	34,174	35,577	35,975	38,104	424,344	410,512
541	Grocery stores	33,503	32,054	31,000	33,269	32,285	34,512	33,523	34,518	34,914	32,418	33,693	34,048	35,598	401,832	389,134
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	475	451	455	488	483	519	514	512	545	449	450	481	627	5,974	5,969
546	Retail bakeries	580	477	477	531	514	581	552	535	557	545	617	607	658	6,651	6,492
554	Gasoline service stations	12,783	11,678	11,435	12,660	13,101	14,272	13,868	13,855	14,023	12,935	13,484	13,020	13,205	157,536	148,192
56	Apparel & accessory stores	6,906	6,472	7,352	8,796	8,982	9,386	8,896	8,569	10,314	9,008	9,522	10,727	15,051	113,075	109,962
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings.	746	675	684	742	752	812	792	688	795	777	828	960	1,487	9,992	10,091
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	1,982	1,892	2,194	2,557	2,694	2,924	2,724	2,412	2,718	2,598	2,760	2,996	4,321	32,790	34,576
562	Women's ready to wear	1,694	1,614	1,885	2,247	2,395	2,597	2,407	2,092	2,370	2,288	2,420	2,598	3,670	28,583	30,717
565	Family clothing stores	2,512	2,272	2,646	3,221	3,210	3,319	3,205	3,246	3,920	3,395	3,729	4,421	6,313	42,897	38,869
566	Shoe stores	1,148	1,129	1,279	1,587	1,676	1,702	1,588	1,563	2,004	1,508	1,491	1,602	2,012	19,141	18,758
58	Eating and drinking places	18,554	17,583	18,347	20,106	19,639	20,880	20,354	20,630	21,430	19,416	20,219	19,774	19,943	238,321	233,606
5812	Eating places	17,633	16,699	17,433	19,112	18,702	19,905	19,402	19,654	20,417	18,480	19,242	18,800	18,957	226,803	222,266
5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	10,252	9,608	10,097	11,003	10,722	11,272	10,887	11,157	11,805	10,647	11,021	10,913	10,734	129,866	126,913
5812 pt.	Refreshment places	7,047	6,894	7,084	7,813	7,644	8,220	8,143	8,174	8,267	7,446	7,811	7,530	7,823	92,849	92,381
5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	921	884	914	994	937	975	952	976	1,013	936	977	974	986	11,518	11,340
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,733	6,995	6,961	7,355	7,201	7,517	7,039	7,251	7,394	6,989	7,580	7,480	9,433	89,195	84,240
592	Liquor stores	1,786	1,705	1,674	1,860	1,820	1,979	1,979	2,056	2,087	1,804	1,886	2,023	2,592	23,465	22,463
596	Nonstore retailers ²	5,464	5,276	5,242	5,714	5,595	5,519	5,109	5,159	5,274	5,677	6,686	7,377	8,420	71,048	69,770
5961	Total mail order ³	3,785	3,716	3,388	3,749	3,631	3,567	3,284	3,425	3,495	3,716	4,473	5,202	6,178	47,824	46,042
598	Fuel dealers	2,242	2,145	1,913	1,614	1,191	938	747	772	796	947	1,262	1,441	1,934	15,700	13,742
53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	44,517	41,171	43,827	49,331	49,234	53,229	51,388	50,153	56,196	50,575	53,998	63,499	93,241	655,842	624,818
594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	6,451	6,032	6,171	6,523	6,656	7,349	7,164	7,247	8,157	7,024	7,314	9,255	17,649	96,541	88,029

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business—Con.

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997	1996												Total 12 mos.	
		Jan. ^P	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1996	1995
	Adjusted⁵															
	Retail sales, total	211,456	199,132	202,840	204,228	204,031	205,669	204,366	204,719	204,599	206,127	207,487	207,324	208,319		
	Total (excl. automotive group)	159,359	150,165	152,000	152,951	154,566	155,351	154,757	154,988	154,577	155,406	156,436	156,742	157,218		
	Durable goods, total	86,179	80,556	83,043	84,108	82,794	84,053	83,472	83,539	83,536	84,189	84,881	84,604	84,945		
52	Building materials group stores . . .	11,330	10,275	10,519	10,511	10,856	11,025	11,441	11,381	11,161	11,227	11,211	11,167	11,154		
521.3	Building materials, supply stores . .	8,718	7,857	8,070	8,162	8,311	8,580	8,716	8,754	8,605	8,631	8,580	8,626	8,565		
525	Hardware stores	1,255	1,175	1,194	1,137	1,226	1,208	1,202	1,201	1,173	1,181	1,211	1,198	1,232		
55 ex	Automotive dealers	52,097	48,967	50,840	51,277	49,465	50,318	49,609	49,731	50,022	50,721	51,051	50,582	51,101		
554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	49,048	45,961	47,804	48,231	46,415	47,229	46,546	46,653	46,968	47,658	47,901	47,567	48,061		
551.2,5	Auto & home supply stores	3,049	3,006	3,036	3,046	3,050	3,089	3,063	3,078	3,054	3,063	3,150	3,015	3,040		
6,7,9	Furniture group stores	11,429	10,933	11,161	11,375	11,417	11,428	11,352	11,399	11,511	11,522	11,485	11,414	11,381		
553	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,815	5,321	5,497	5,611	5,592	5,590	5,603	5,644	5,635	5,631	5,694	5,702	5,731		
57	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,766	4,720	4,751	4,839	4,902	4,903	4,825	4,849	4,959	5,019	4,921	4,839	4,778		
571																
5722,31,34																
	Nondurable goods, total	125,277	118,576	119,797	120,120	121,237	121,616	120,894	121,180	121,063	121,938	122,606	122,720	123,374		
53	General merchandise group stores	27,015	24,898	25,340	25,317	25,641	25,929	25,688	25,752	25,922	25,897	26,022	25,903	26,235		
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) . .	21,168	19,402	19,706	19,659	20,003	20,228	19,981	19,999	20,173	20,200	20,303	20,237	20,713		
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹ .	21,278	19,591	20,170	20,010	20,372	20,485	20,259	20,353	20,503	20,582	20,638	20,682	21,059		
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including, leased depts.) ¹	4,786	4,414	4,710	4,599	4,673	4,607	4,544	4,529	4,584	4,604	4,613	4,603	4,704		
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including, leased depts.) ¹	13,049	11,988	12,155	12,151	12,324	12,456	12,430	12,500	12,567	12,598	12,662	12,720	12,851		
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including, leased depts.) ¹	3,443	3,189	3,305	3,260	3,375	3,422	3,285	3,324	3,352	3,380	3,363	3,359	3,504		
533	Variety stores	722	642	667	689	674	680	687	708	691	679	699	687	696		
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	5,125	4,854	4,967	4,969	4,964	5,021	5,020	5,045	5,058	5,018	5,020	4,979	4,826		
54	Food group stores	35,989	34,957	34,805	34,956	35,174	35,014	35,086	35,403	35,248	35,705	35,769	35,680	35,852		
541	Grocery stores	33,979	33,114	32,979	33,103	33,318	33,153	33,191	33,545	33,379	33,839	33,896	33,778	33,935		
554	Gasoline service stations	13,730	12,571	12,594	13,025	13,355	13,567	13,271	12,973	12,960	13,026	13,194	13,286	13,461		
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,589	9,166	9,608	9,318	9,500	9,573	9,484	9,411	9,420	9,519	9,449	9,249	9,327		
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings. .	898	827	858	828	821	840	816	831	848	861	840	831	793		
562.3	Women's clothing specialty stores . .	2,792	2,691	2,806	2,658	2,769	2,820	2,835	2,695	2,680	2,738	2,714	2,670	2,711		
566	Shoe stores	1,577	1,572	1,609	1,605	1,640	1,640	1,606	1,630	1,601	1,550	1,560	1,546	1,574		
58	Eating and drinking places	20,344	19,537	19,856	19,750	19,817	19,848	19,571	19,685	19,697	19,752	19,940	20,260	20,104		
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,811	7,116	7,162	7,318	7,266	7,341	7,332	7,437	7,499	7,507	7,657	7,648	7,663		
592	Liquor stores	2,025	1,962	1,940	1,960	1,949	1,950	1,967	1,969	1,982	1,929	1,928	1,938	1,956		
5961	Total mail order ³	3,963	3,839	3,995	3,897	3,921	3,985	4,100	4,117	4,008	4,009	3,955	3,911	3,991		
53,56	GAF, total⁴	56,158	52,632	53,804	53,888	54,426	54,841	54,511	54,641	54,986	54,956	55,056	54,807	55,206		
57,594																

^PPreliminary estimates.¹Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.²Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail order.³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores). (See appendix A.)⁵Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. (See appendix C.)⁶For yearly total, refer to unadjusted section.

Note: U.S. and group totals include data for kinds of business not shown. Measures of sampling variability are shown in table B-1.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change			SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change		
		Jan. 1997 from		1 mos. 1997 from 1 mos. 1996			Jan. 1997 from		1 mos. 1997 from 1 mos. 1996
		Jan. 1996	Dec. 1996				Jan. 1996	Dec. 1996	
	Unadjusted				58	Eating and drinking places	+5.5	-7.0	+5.5
	Retail sales, total	+7.3	-23.9	+7.3	5812	Eating places	+5.6	-7.0	+5.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+7.1	-30.2	+7.1	5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	+6.7	-4.5	+6.7
	Durable goods, total	+7.7	-18.0	+7.7	5812 pt.	Refreshment places	+2.2	-9.9	+2.2
	Building materials group stores	+9.6	-14.3	+9.6	5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	+4.2	-6.6	+4.2
52	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	+9.8	-10.9	+9.8	591	Drug & proprietary stores	+10.6	-18.0	+10.6
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores ..	+10.3	-9.7	+10.3	592	Liquor stores	+4.8	-31.1	+4.8
521,3	Paint, glass, wallpaper stores*	+2.9	-1.9	+2.9	5943	Stationery stores*	+11.5	-8.9	+11.5
523	Hardware stores	+6.7	-18.4	+6.7	596	Nonstore retailers ²	+3.6	-35.1	+3.6
525					5961	Total mail order ³	+1.9	-38.7	+1.9
55 ex	Automotive dealers	+7.7	+4.7	+7.7	598	Fuel dealers	+4.5	+15.9	+4.5
554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	+8.0	+5.4	+8.0	5992	Florist shops*	+10.1	-42.5	+10.1
551,2,5	Motor vehicle dealers	+7.8	+5.8	+7.8	53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	+8.1	-52.3	+8.1
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.) ..	+7.4	+5.4	+7.4	594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	+6.9	-63.4	+6.9
551	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.) ..	+7.4	+5.4	+7.4		Adjusted⁵			
553	Auto & home supply stores	+2.0	-4.2	+2.0		Retail sales, total	+6.2	+1.5	+6.2
57	Furniture group stores	+4.6	-33.8	+4.6		Total (excl. automotive group) ..	+6.1	+1.4	+6.1
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	+9.5	-22.8	+9.5		Durable goods, total	+7.0	+1.5	+7.0
5712	Furniture stores	+11.2	-11.0	+11.2	52	Building materials group stores	+10.3	+1.6	+10.3
5713	Floor covering stores	+11.5	-7.7	+11.5	521,3	Building materials, supply stores	+11.0	+1.8	+11.0
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	+8	-39.6	+8	525	Hardware stores	+6.8	+1.9	+6.8
5722	Household appliance stores	+6.8	-27.5	+6.8	55 ex	Automotive dealers	+6.4	+1.9	+6.4
5731,34	Radio, TV and computer stores ..	-2	-41.3	-2	554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	+6.7	+2.1	+6.7
5735,6	Music stores*	-3.4	-53.0	-3.4	551,2,5 6,7,9	Auto & home supply stores	+1.4	+3	+1.4
5941	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	+5.3	-49.5	+5.3	553	Furniture group stores	+4.5	+4	+4.5
5942	Book stores	+7.7	-5.8	+7.7	57	Furniture & home furn. stores	+9.3	+1.5	+9.3
5944	Jewelry stores	+6.1	-75.7	+6.1	571	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	+1.0	-3	+1.0
5946	Camera,photographic supply stores* ..	+11.5	-49.6	+11.5	5722,31,34	Nondurable goods, total	+5.7	+1.5	+5.7
5999 pt.	Optical goods stores*	+8.7	+3.3	+8.7		General merchandise group stores ..	+8.5	+3.0	+8.5
	Nondurable goods, total	+7.0	-27.4	+7.0	53	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	+9.1	+2.2	+9.1
53	General merchandise group stores ..	+10.9	-53.8	+10.9	531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	+8.6	+1.0	+8.6
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	+11.6	-55.9	+11.6	531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+8.4	+1.7	+8.4
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ¹	+11.0	-56.0	+11.0	531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+8.9	+1.5	+8.9
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+11.2	-66.5	+11.2	531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+8.0	-1.7	+8.0
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+11.7	-49.8	+11.7	533	Variety stores	+12.5	+3.7	+12.5
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ¹	+8.1	-60.5	+8.1	539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	+5.6	+6.2	+5.6
533	Variety stores	+17.9	-55.1	+17.9	54	Food group stores	+3.0	+4	+3.0
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	+7.6	-43.7	+7.6	541	Grocery stores	+2.6	+1	+2.6
54	Food group stores	+4.8	-7.3	+4.8	554	Gasoline service stations	+9.2	+2.0	+9.2
541	Grocery stores	+4.5	-5.9	+4.5	56	Apparel & accessory stores	+4.6	+2.8	+4.6
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	+5.3	-24.2	+5.3	561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings.	+8.6	+13.2	+8.6
543	Fruit stores & vegetable markets*	+9.9	-22.4	+9.9	562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	+3.8	+3.0	+3.8
544	Candy, nut, confectionery stores*	+9.3	-76.8	+9.3	566	Shoe stores	+3	+2	+3
546	Retail bakeries	+21.6	-11.9	+21.6	58	Eating and drinking places	+4.1	+1.2	+4.1
554	Gasoline service stations	+9.5	-3.2	+9.5	591	Drug & proprietary stores	+9.8	+1.9	+9.8
56	Apparel & accessory stores	+6.7	-54.1	+6.7	592	Liquor stores	+3.2	+3.5	+3.2
561	Men's & boys' clothing, furnishings.	+10.5	-49.8	+10.5	5961	Total mail order ³	+3.2	-7	+3.2
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	+4.8	-54.1	+4.8	53,56, 57,594	GAF, total⁴	+6.7	+1.7	+6.7
562	Women's ready to wear stores	+5.0	-53.8	+5.0					
565	Family clothing stores	+10.6	-60.2	+10.6					
566	Shoe stores	+1.7	-42.9	+1.7					

*See appendix A, Percent Change.

¹Based on data for leased departments operated within department stores.²Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail order.³The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores). (See appendix A.)⁵Based on data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not price changes.

Note: Measures of sampling variability for unadjusted data are shown in table B-1.

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kinds of Business: 1996

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail sales, total	199,132	202,840	204,228	204,031	205,669	204,366	204,719	204,599	206,127	207,487	207,324	208,319
	Total (excl. automotive group)	150,165	152,000	152,951	154,566	155,351	154,757	154,988	154,577	155,406	156,436	156,742	157,218
	Durable goods, total	80,556	83,043	84,108	82,794	84,053	83,472	83,539	83,536	84,189	84,881	84,604	84,945
52	Building materials group stores	10,275	10,519	10,511	10,856	11,025	11,441	11,381	11,161	11,227	11,211	11,167	11,154
521.3	Building materials, supply stores	7,857	8,070	8,162	8,311	8,580	8,716	8,754	8,605	8,631	8,580	8,626	8,565
525	Hardware stores	1,175	1,194	1,137	1,226	1,208	1,202	1,201	1,173	1,181	1,211	1,198	1,232
55 ex													
554	Automotive dealers	48,967	50,840	51,277	49,465	50,318	49,609	49,731	50,022	50,721	51,051	50,582	51,101
551,2,5	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous												
6,7,9	automobile dealers	45,961	47,804	48,231	46,415	47,229	46,546	46,653	46,968	47,658	47,901	47,567	48,061
553	Auto & home supply stores	3,006	3,036	3,046	3,050	3,089	3,063	3,078	3,054	3,063	3,150	3,015	3,040
57	Furniture group stores	10,933	11,161	11,375	11,417	11,428	11,352	11,399	11,511	11,522	11,485	11,414	11,381
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	5,321	5,497	5,611	5,592	5,590	5,603	5,644	5,635	5,631	5,694	5,702	5,731
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores	4,720	4,751	4,839	4,902	4,903	4,825	4,849	4,959	5,019	4,921	4,839	4,778
	Nondurable goods, total	118,576	119,797	120,120	121,237	121,616	120,894	121,180	121,063	121,938	122,606	122,720	123,374
53	General merchandise group stores	24,898	25,340	25,317	25,641	25,929	25,688	25,752	25,922	25,897	26,022	25,903	26,235
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	19,402	19,706	19,659	20,003	20,228	19,981	19,999	20,173	20,200	20,303	20,237	20,713
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ²	19,591	20,170	20,010	20,372	20,485	20,259	20,353	20,503	20,582	20,638	20,682	21,059
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including. leased depts.) ²	4,414	4,710	4,599	4,673	4,607	4,544	4,529	4,584	4,604	4,613	4,603	4,704
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including. leased depts.) ²	11,988	12,155	12,151	12,324	12,456	12,430	12,500	12,567	12,598	12,662	12,720	12,851
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including. leased depts.) ²	3,189	3,305	3,260	3,375	3,422	3,285	3,324	3,352	3,380	3,363	3,359	3,504
533	Variety stores	642	667	689	674	680	687	708	691	679	699	687	696
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	4,854	4,967	4,969	4,964	5,021	5,020	5,045	5,058	5,018	5,020	4,979	4,826
54	Food group stores	34,957	34,805	34,956	35,174	35,014	35,086	35,403	35,248	35,705	35,769	35,680	35,852
541	Grocery stores	33,114	32,979	33,103	33,318	33,153	33,191	33,545	33,379	33,839	33,896	33,778	33,935
554	Gasoline service stations	12,571	12,594	13,025	13,355	13,567	13,271	12,973	12,960	13,026	13,194	13,286	13,461
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,166	9,608	9,318	9,500	9,573	9,484	9,411	9,420	9,519	9,449	9,249	9,327
561	Mens & boys' clothing, furnishings.	827	858	828	821	840	816	831	848	861	840	831	793
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	2,691	2,806	2,658	2,769	2,820	2,835	2,695	2,680	2,738	2,714	2,670	2,711
566	Shoe stores	1,572	1,609	1,605	1,640	1,640	1,606	1,630	1,601	1,550	1,560	1,546	1,574
58	Eating and drinking places	19,537	19,856	19,750	19,817	19,848	19,571	19,685	19,697	19,752	19,940	20,260	20,104
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,116	7,162	7,318	7,266	7,341	7,332	7,437	7,499	7,507	7,657	7,648	7,663
592	Liquor stores	1,962	1,940	1,960	1,949	1,950	1,967	1,969	1,982	1,929	1,928	1,938	1,956
5961	Total mail order ³	3,839	3,995	3,897	3,921	3,985	4,100	4,117	4,008	4,009	3,955	3,911	3,991
53;56 57,594	GAF, total ⁴	52,632	53,804	53,888	54,426	54,841	54,511	54,641	54,986	54,956	55,056	54,807	55,206

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. (See appendix C.)

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

³The sales estimates for "total mail order," SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the Monthly Retail Trade Report.

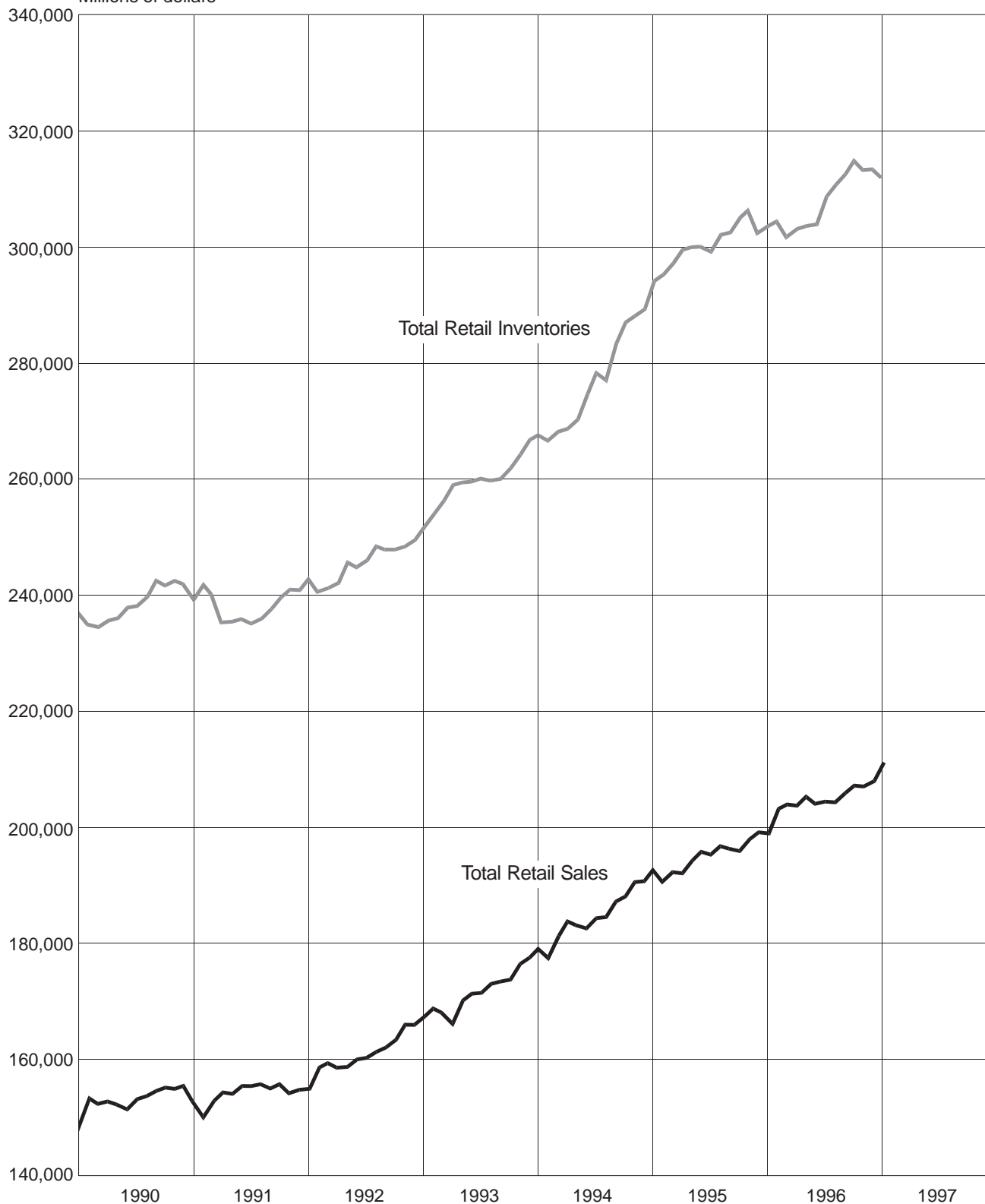
⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. (See appendix A.)

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown.

Figure 3.
Estimated Monthly Retail Sales and End-of-Month Inventories:
January 1990 – January 1997

(Seasonally adjusted, but not adjusted for price changes)

Millions of dollars



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Monthly Retail Trade.

Table 4. Estimated End-of-Month Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	1997	1996												Percent change Jan. 1997 from	
		Jan. ^P	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. 1996	Dec. 1996
	Unadjusted															
	Retail Inventories, total	303,935	295,770	300,102	301,966	303,751	302,956	299,602	299,278	303,037	313,259	333,908	338,062	308,795	+2.8	-1.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)	214,073	207,013	209,963	213,823	216,326	215,382	213,042	217,752	222,330	230,718	247,237	249,570	217,698	+3.4	-1.7
	Durable goods, total	164,750	160,138	162,629	162,468	163,663	163,815	161,960	157,670	158,663	162,764	172,901	175,044	167,631	+2.9	-1.7
52	Building materials group stores	21,618	20,347	20,980	22,005	22,304	22,382	22,269	21,950	21,458	21,455	21,789	21,742	21,683	+6.2	-3
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	89,862	88,757	90,139	88,143	87,425	87,574	86,560	81,526	80,707	82,541	86,671	88,492	91,097	+1.2	-1.4
57	Furniture group stores	23,215	23,389	23,467	23,623	24,175	24,087	23,572	23,722	24,293	25,394	27,587	27,478	23,663	-7	-1.9
	Nondurable goods, total	139,185	135,632	137,473	139,498	140,088	139,141	137,642	141,608	144,374	150,495	161,007	163,018	141,164	+2.6	-1.4
53	General merchandise group stores	52,975	52,884	54,005	55,451	55,885	55,504	54,689	56,132	58,038	61,951	67,563	68,854	53,967	+2	-1.8
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	43,136	42,234	43,512	44,715	45,118	44,791	44,091	45,228	46,974	50,053	54,683	56,050	43,862	+2.1	-1.7
54	Food group stores	29,004	27,787	27,436	27,633	27,731	27,587	27,471	27,672	27,589	28,165	29,523	30,252	29,663	+4.4	-2.2
56	Apparel & accessory stores	20,875	20,772	21,869	22,752	22,283	21,763	21,557	22,842	23,619	24,300	26,108	26,535	21,222	+5	-1.6
	Adjusted¹															
	Retail Inventories, total	312,161	303,912	304,824	302,153	303,397	303,930	304,192	308,858	310,926	312,771	315,357	313,616	313,713	+2.7	-5
	Total (excl. automotive group)	224,679	217,373	218,080	218,139	219,787	219,755	219,301	222,328	222,703	223,513	225,756	225,682	225,500	+3.4	-4
	Durable goods, total	165,523	160,866	161,575	159,659	160,490	161,156	161,489	164,086	166,282	167,916	169,830	167,534	167,115	+2.9	-1.0
52	Building materials group stores	22,310	20,998	21,001	21,261	21,384	21,459	21,854	21,972	21,741	21,938	22,076	22,186	22,446	+6.2	-6
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	87,482	86,539	86,744	84,014	83,610	84,175	84,891	86,530	88,223	89,258	89,601	87,934	88,213	+1.1	-8
57	Furniture group stores	23,859	24,013	24,496	24,429	24,974	24,987	24,427	24,866	24,713	24,630	24,921	24,082	23,592	-6	+1.1
	Nondurable goods, total	146,638	143,046	143,249	142,494	142,907	142,774	142,703	144,772	144,644	144,855	145,527	146,082	146,598	+2.5	.0
53	General merchandise group stores	57,609	57,532	57,376	57,107	57,187	57,078	57,391	58,156	58,503	58,510	58,511	58,527	58,147	+1	-9
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	46,938	45,956	46,044	46,050	46,133	46,034	46,363	46,868	47,305	47,264	47,427	47,621	47,316	+2.1	-8
54	Food group stores	28,902	27,689	27,760	27,737	28,015	28,006	27,814	28,162	28,246	28,371	28,694	28,903	28,937	+4.4	-1
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,429	23,313	23,240	23,216	22,645	22,506	22,620	22,819	22,798	22,732	22,982	23,379	23,321	+5	+5

^PPreliminary estimates (appendix B, table B-8 contains measures of revisions to preliminary estimates).¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. (See appendix C.)

Note: U.S. and group totals include data for kinds of business not shown. Measures of sampling variability are shown in table B-6.

Table 5. Inventories/Sales Ratios

SIC code	Kind of business	1997	1996											
		Jan. ^P	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Unadjusted													
	Retail trade, total	1.62	1.69	1.65	1.50	1.52	1.41	1.45	1.45	1.42	1.59	1.60	1.60	1.25
	Total (excl. automotive group) . . .	1.52	1.57	1.57	1.45	1.46	1.35	1.39	1.42	1.39	1.56	1.57	1.51	1.08
	Durable goods, total	2.20	2.30	2.18	1.94	1.95	1.79	1.86	1.81	1.79	1.99	2.01	2.14	1.83
	Building materials group stores	2.47	2.55	2.57	2.28	1.90	1.70	1.75	1.75	1.76	1.86	1.79	2.01	2.12
52	Automotive dealers	1.93	2.05	1.89	1.64	1.67	1.56	1.63	1.54	1.51	1.67	1.66	1.91	2.05
55 ex	Furniture group stores	2.19	2.30	2.37	2.17	2.33	2.21	2.19	2.17	2.09	2.31	2.40	2.15	1.47
554														
57														
	Nondurable goods, total	1.24	1.29	1.28	1.19	1.21	1.12	1.15	1.19	1.15	1.30	1.31	1.25	.91
53	General merchandise group stores	2.58	2.86	2.65	2.40	2.41	2.17	2.23	2.40	2.22	2.63	2.63	2.24	1.21
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.73	2.99	2.77	2.49	2.50	2.26	2.33	2.51	2.30	2.72	2.75	2.31	1.22
54	Food group stores82	.83	.84	.79	.81	.76	.78	.76	.75	.82	.83	.84	.78
56	Apparel & accessory stores	3.02	3.21	2.97	2.59	2.48	2.32	2.42	2.67	2.29	2.70	2.74	2.47	1.41
	Adjusted¹													
	Retail trade, total	1.48	1.53	1.50	1.48	1.49	1.48	1.49	1.51	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.51	1.51
	Total (excl. automotive group) . . .	1.41	1.45	1.43	1.43	1.42	1.41	1.42	1.43	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.43
	Durable goods, total	1.92	2.00	1.95	1.90	1.94	1.92	1.93	1.96	1.99	1.99	2.00	1.98	1.97
	Building materials group stores	1.97	2.04	2.00	2.02	1.97	1.95	1.91	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.97	1.99	2.01
52	Automotive dealers	1.68	1.77	1.71	1.64	1.69	1.67	1.71	1.74	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.73
55 ex	Furniture group stores	2.09	2.20	2.19	2.15	2.19	2.19	2.15	2.18	2.15	2.14	2.17	2.11	2.07
554														
57														
	Nondurable goods, total	1.17	1.21	1.20	1.19	1.18	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19
53	General merchandise group stores	2.13	2.31	2.26	2.26	2.23	2.20	2.23	2.26	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.26	2.22
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.22	2.37	2.34	2.34	2.31	2.28	2.32	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.35	2.28
54	Food group stores80	.79	.80	.79	.80	.80	.79	.80	.80	.79	.80	.81	.81
56	Apparel & accessory stores	2.44	2.54	2.42	2.49	2.38	2.35	2.39	2.42	2.42	2.39	2.43	2.53	2.50

^PPreliminary estimates¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes.

Table 6. Estimated End-of-Month Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business: 1996

[Data in millions of dollars]

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail Inventories, total	303,912	304,824	302,153	303,397	303,930	304,192	308,858	310,926	312,771	315,357	313,616	313,713
	Total (excl. automotive group)	217,373	218,080	218,139	219,787	219,755	219,301	222,328	222,703	223,513	225,756	225,682	225,500
	Durable goods, total	160,866	161,575	159,659	160,490	161,156	161,489	164,086	166,282	167,916	169,830	167,534	167,115
	Building materials group stores	20,998	21,001	21,261	21,384	21,459	21,854	21,972	21,741	21,938	22,076	22,186	22,446
52	Automotive dealers	86,539	86,744	84,014	83,610	84,175	84,891	86,530	88,223	89,258	89,601	87,934	88,213
55 ex	Furniture group stores	24,013	24,496	24,429	24,974	24,987	24,427	24,866	24,713	24,630	24,921	24,082	23,592
554													
57	Nondurable goods, total	143,046	143,249	142,494	142,907	142,774	142,703	144,772	144,644	144,855	145,527	146,082	146,598
53	General merchandise group stores	57,532	57,376	57,107	57,187	57,078	57,391	58,156	58,503	58,510	58,511	58,527	58,147
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	45,956	46,044	46,050	46,133	46,034	46,363	46,868	47,305	47,264	47,427	47,621	47,316
54	Food group stores	27,689	27,760	27,737	28,015	28,006	27,814	28,162	28,246	28,371	28,694	28,903	28,937
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,313	23,240	23,216	22,645	22,506	22,620	22,819	22,798	22,732	22,982	23,379	23,321

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. (See appendix C.)

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown.

Table 7. Inventories/Sales Ratios by Kinds of Business: 1996

SIC code	Kind of business	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Adjusted¹												
	Retail trade, total	1.53	1.50	1.48	1.49	1.48	1.49	1.51	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.51	1.51
	Total (excl. automotive group)	1.45	1.43	1.43	1.42	1.41	1.42	1.43	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.43
	Durable goods, total	2.00	1.95	1.90	1.94	1.92	1.93	1.96	1.99	1.99	2.00	1.98	1.97
	Building materials group stores	2.04	2.00	2.02	1.97	1.95	1.91	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.97	1.99	2.01
52	Automotive dealers	1.77	1.71	1.64	1.69	1.67	1.71	1.74	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.73
55 ex	Furniture group stores	2.20	2.19	2.15	2.19	2.19	2.15	2.18	2.15	2.14	2.17	2.11	2.07
554													
57	Nondurable goods, total	1.21	1.20	1.19	1.18	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19	1.19
53	General merchandise group stores	2.31	2.26	2.26	2.23	2.20	2.23	2.26	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.26	2.22
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	2.37	2.34	2.34	2.31	2.28	2.32	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.35	2.28
54	Food group stores	0.79	0.80	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.79	0.80	0.81	0.81
56	Apparel & accessory stores	2.54	2.42	2.49	2.38	2.35	2.39	2.42	2.42	2.39	2.43	2.53	2.50

¹Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, but not for price changes.

Appendix A.

Explanatory Material

INTRODUCTION

The Monthly Retail Trade report is produced by the Bureau of the Census to provide (1) estimates of sales of retail stores by kind of business for the United States (2) national estimates of end-of-month inventories of retail establishments by kind of business. The retail sales and inventories estimates in this report are developed from samples representing all sizes of firms and kinds of business in retail trade throughout the nation. The samples have been designed so that estimates can be evaluated in terms of their sampling variability. Effective with the August 1993 report, a benchmarking operation, described below, accounted for the sales and inventories estimates for the new employers and nonemployers formerly represented by an area sample.

DESCRIPTION OF SALES AND INVENTORIES SAMPLES

Sales Sample

Monthly retail sales estimates are based on a probability sample selected from the retail employers (Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 52-59) contained in the Census Bureau's Standard Statistical Establishment List (SSEL). The SSEL includes employers who make social security payments for their employees under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA).

The list sample originally was drawn from the SSEL as updated to December 31, 1989. The initial SSEL consisted of two lists. The first list was made up of all employer identification (EIN) numbers (assigned in connection with FICA) with reported payroll in at least one quarter of 1989. The second list consisted of all establishments of known multiestablishment companies as of December 31, 1989. These lists contained information on sales/receipts, payroll, employment, name and address, kind-of-business classification, etc. Before the sampling frame was available, a study was made of the universe of retail businesses using files from the 1987 Census of Retail Trade. This study determined the stratification of the sampling units based on 1987 sales and kind of business, and also determined the optimal allocation of the sample necessary to meet specified sampling variability objectives for sales estimates for different kind-of-business groups. The primary stratum boundary determined in the study was the

certainty cutoff to be used for each kind of business. The cutoff, which ranged from annual sales of \$2.5 million to annual sales of \$100 million, was particularly important since it also determined the type of sampling unit.

Sampling units for the list sample consisted of both companies and EINs. For an EIN to be eligible for the initial list sample, the EIN had to be active, (i.e., had payroll in 1989 and was on the latest available Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mailing list for FICA taxpayers). If a known company had total retail sales (on a 1987 basis) above the cutoff for its major kind of business, the company was selected for the sample with certainty (i.e., probability = 1.0). The company, which might consist of two or more EINs, was then the sampling unit; therefore, any new retail establishments that the company might acquire, even if under new or different EINs, were in the sample with certainty. Single-establishment companies, whether or not selected with certainty, were considered as EIN sampling units.

All retail companies not selected with certainty were treated on an EIN basis; that is, the EIN was the sampling unit. The EINs were stratified according to their major kind of business and their estimated sales (on a 1987 basis). Within each stratum, a simple random sample of EINs was selected. The sampling rates for these EINs varied between 1 in 3 and 1 in 1,000.

For all EIN 'births' after the initial selection, a two-phase selection procedure was used. EIN births are new EINs recently assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), with a kind-of-business classification assigned by the Social Security Administration (SSA), and currently on the IRS mailing list for FICA taxpayers. In the first phase, births were stratified by kind of business and size (expected employment or quarterly payroll). A relatively large sample was drawn and canvassed for a more reliable measure of size (sales/receipts in 2 recent months) and a more detailed kind-of-business code, if needed.

Using this more reliable information, the births selected in the first phase were subjected to probability-proportional-to-size sampling with overall probabilities equivalent to those used in drawing the initial sample from the 1989 SSEL. Because of the lag in reporting births to the IRS and the SSA and the time needed to accomplish the two-phase birth-selection procedure carried out quarterly, births were actually added to the list sample approximately 9 months after they began operation. During this 9 month period, the

reports from the existing list sample retailers accounted for the period-to-period changes, while benchmarking adjusted the levels to be consistent with the prior annual survey.

To be eligible for list sample canvass and tabulation in a given month, a retail noncertainty business must meet both of the following requirements:

1. It must be on the latest available IRS mailing list for the FICA taxpayers.
2. It must have been selected from either the SSEL or the file of employer births. For this purpose, a universe file of all retail businesses ever given a chance for selection is maintained. This file shows, among other things, which EINs actually have been selected.

For businesses selected into the sample with certainty, the first requirement is changed. These certainty sampling units are not dropped from canvass and tabulation if they are no longer on the IRS mailing list. Rather, these businesses are contacted, and if there are successor businesses, they are added to the survey. This is a tighter form of control used for these larger businesses.

The list sample is updated quarterly to account for business births and deaths and represents approximately 96 percent of retail sales. Canvass of this component is primarily by mail. Recent EIN births and nonemployers, not accounted for by the list sample, represent the balance of retail sales. The benchmarking procedure adds this component to the list sample estimates to yield the total retail estimates.

Inventory Sample

The list sample portion of the inventory sample is a subsample of the EINs and companies included in the monthly retail sales survey. Benchmarking also accounted for the inventories of recent EIN births and nonemployers.

Studies similar to those performed for the sales sample were conducted prior to selecting the inventory sample. Those studies determined the stratification (based on sales from the 1987 Census of Retail Trade), allocation (based on inventory from the 1987 Annual Retail Trade Survey), and certainty cutoffs required to meet desired inventory sampling variability constraints for various kind-of-business groups.

The initial inventory list sample was selected from the initial sales list sample by first stratifying EINs and companies by kind-of-business groups and estimated sales (on a 1987 basis). To meet reliability constraints, the required number of cases in each size stratum were then selected on a probability-proportional-to-size basis. Some companies and EINs because of their relatively large impact on the inventory estimates, were selected with certainty in order to reduce the sampling variability associated with the estimates.

After the initial inventory sample selection, all births selected into the sales sample were subjected to probability-proportional-to-size sampling with overall probabilities equivalent to those used in drawing the initial inventory sample.

BENCHMARKING

Retail sales in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking operation that developed revised monthly sales estimates for the period January 1987 through December 1992. The benchmarking process equated the 12-month sum of the estimates for each of the years 1987 through 1991 to the annual sales estimate derived from the 1987 census of Retail Trade and the Annual Retail Trade Surveys. The benchmarking process also minimized the differences between the month-to-month trends of the estimates from the original and the revised series. We derived the original series estimates by using the composite estimation procedures described below under *estimation procedures*.

We revised the end-of-month inventory estimates for the period January 1988 through December 1992. The benchmarking process equated the 1988 through 1991 December estimates to the end-of-year inventory estimates derived from the Annual Retail Trade Surveys. The process also minimized changes to the month-to-month trends of the original inventory series. We derived the original inventory estimates using the composite estimation procedures.

We derived carry-forward factors for sales and inventories by dividing the revised December 1991 estimates by the original composite estimates for December 1991. Through the use of these carry-forward factors, the effects of the revision process were applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1991. These factors were derived at the most detailed kind-of-business levels. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate detail level estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Starting with the July 1993 final and August 1993 preliminary estimates, the carry-forward factors were adjusted to include a component representing EIN birth employers and nonemployers. This adjustment was approximately 4 percent of the total retail sales estimate, although it varies by kind of business.

ESTIMATION PROCEDURES

Rotating sample panels are used for the sales and inventory samples (except for very large retail businesses which are selected with certainty and canvassed each month). For sampling units in the rotating panels, 2 months of data are obtained at each enumeration. For example, February list sample rotating panel cases report data for February (the current month) and January (the previous month). In the following month, different rotating panels (the March panels) report figures for March and February.

Three list sample panels are used. This permits the use of a composite estimation procedure that provides estimates more reliable than those that would be obtained from a completely fixed sample of about twice the size and also reduces the reporting burden for selected businesses.

The first estimate issued each month, based on the full sample, is called the preliminary estimate. The preliminary composite estimate for the current month at each three-digit SIC level for sales and at each major kind-of-business grouping for inventory is a weighted average of two estimates: (1) the current month unbiased estimate (weight 0.25) and (2) a ratio estimate (weight 0.75) obtained by multiplying the current-to-previous month ratios developed from the current month report forms by the preliminary composite estimate for the previous month.

A final estimate is developed 1 month later using information available from the following month's enumeration. The final composite estimate for individual kind-of-business levels is also a weighted average of two estimates – the preliminary composite estimate for a given month (weight 0.8) and the unbiased estimate (weight 0.2) for the same month as obtained from the next month's reporting panel. The aggregate level estimates are obtained by adding the individual kind-of-business components.

The preliminary composite estimates provide a measure of the dollar volume level that is considerably more reliable than the unbiased estimates, and the final composite estimates are generally more reliable than the preliminary composite estimates. The most reliable indication of month-to-month trend is the ratio of the current month's preliminary composite estimate divided by the previous month's final composite estimate. This is true because the numerator and denominator of this ratio are more highly correlated than would be the case if the numerator and denominator were two preliminary or two final estimates. The preliminary-final ratio, therefore, has less sampling variability than one based on two preliminary or two final estimates.

Another advantage gained by using the rotating panel system is that the very large non-certainty cases in each enumeration are identified and re-canvassed in the following month or months. This makes it possible to reduce their weights without biasing the results and thus lessen their influence on the estimates. This increases the reliability of the estimates, particularly the measure of month-to-month change.

Percent Change

Month-to-month and year-to-year comparisons for sales and inventory shown in this report are based on the total dollar volume of receipts or value of inventory for each of the periods being compared. These trends thus include the effect of stores starting operation or ceasing operation and are not limited to "identical stores," i.e., those in operation in both of the periods being compared.

The percent changes shown in table 2 for sales for kinds of business not marked with an asterisk are derived directly from the dollar volume estimates in table 1. The sampling variability of dollar estimates for those kinds of business with an asterisk is relatively large. Therefore, such estimates are not published in table 1 for sales. However, the sampling variability of the percent changes derived from such estimates are relatively small and are, therefore, published in table 2 for sales.

Unpublished Data

Selected additional data, such as dollar volume estimates for some kinds of business not separately shown in this report, are produced as a byproduct of the regularly published statistics. These additional data have not been included in this publication because of high imputation or sampling variability (relative to the changes from month to month or between other periods), so as to make them potentially misleading. For a fee, the Bureau of the Census will release such figures for individual use, though not for publication. It should be noted that some unpublished figures can be derived directly from this report by subtracting published data from their respective totals. However, the figures obtained by such subtraction would be subject to the high imputation rates or high sampling variability described previously for unpublished kinds of business.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at retail and wholesale by establishments primarily engaged in retail trade; amounts received from customers for layaway purchases; receipts from rental or leasing of vehicles, equipment, instruments, tools, etc; receipts for delivery, installation, maintenance, repair, alteration, storage, and other services; and receipts from gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer or wholesaler and passed along to the retailer. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Trade-in allowances and manufacturers' rebates are not deducted from total sales, however, rebates offered by the retailer are deducted. Total sales do not include commissions from vending machine operators or nonoperating income from such sources as investments and rental or sales of real estate.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

The sales figures represent total sales and receipts of all establishments primarily engaged in retail trade. They do not include sales at retail by manufacturers, wholesalers, service establishments, and others whose primary activity is other than retail trade.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks of merchandise, valued at cost, on hand for sale by retail establishments at the end of the month. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firms. However, the estimates provided are on a non-LIFO basis. Inventories are shown for retail stores and warehouses combined. Only those warehouses which maintain supplies of merchandise primarily intended for distribution to retail stores within the organization are included. Inventories exclude the value of fixtures, furnishings, equipment, and supplies used in store and warehouse operations and not held for resale.

Inventories-Sales Ratios. The inventories-sales ratios indicate the relationship of end-of-month inventories to sales during the month. The ratios shown are derived by dividing the inventories estimates by the corresponding sales estimates. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from one kind of business to another.

Kind-of-Business Classifications. Retail trade, defined as major groups 52 through 59 of the SIC Manual, includes establishments engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of the goods. Exceptions to this general rule are made necessary by trade practices. For example, lumber yards and paint, glass, and wallpaper stores are included in retail trade if they sell to the general public, even if a higher proportion of their sales is made to contractors. Also, establishments engaged in selling products such as typewriters, stationery, or gasoline to the general public are classified in retail trade, even though such products may not be used for personal or household consumption. However, even within these areas of exception to the general rule, establishments that sell exclusively

to business establishments, institutional and industrial users, or contractors are classified in wholesale trade.

Additional characteristics of retail trade establishments are that they usually operate at fixed places of business; they are engaged in activities to attract the general public to buy; they buy or receive merchandise as well as sell; they may process their products, but such processing is incidental or subordinate to selling; and they are considered as retail in the trade. Not all of these characteristics need be present, and some are modified by trade practice.

Kind-of-business classifications are not interchangeable with commodity classifications. Most businesses sell several kinds of commodities. The kind-of-business code assigned generally reflects the individual commodity, the commodity group which is the primary source of the establishment's receipts, or some mixture of commodities which characterizes the establishment's business. Classification of establishments by kind of business generally does not make it possible to determine either the number of establishments handling a particular commodity or the sales of that commodity. For example, the food group classification excludes stores selling food if the sale of food is not the primary source of receipts; moreover, even though stores are classified as food stores, some of their receipts may be derived from the sales of nonfood products.

GAF. GAF includes the following: General merchandise group stores (SIC 53); apparel and accessory stores (SIC 56); furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores (SIC 57); and miscellaneous shopping goods stores (SIC 594). GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

A description of each kind of business included in the accompanying statistical data is shown in appendix D.

Appendix B.

Reliability of Data

An estimate based on a sample survey will differ from the population value because of sampling variability and nonsampling error. Sampling variability occurs because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the reporting, collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling variability and nonsampling errors.

Measures of Sampling Variability

The particular sample used in these surveys is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. Estimates derived from the different samples would differ from each other. The average of these estimates would be close to the estimate derived from a complete enumeration of the population. This assumes that a complete enumeration has the same nonsampling error as the sample survey. For sales and inventories, the average of the estimates differs from a complete census because of the composite estimation technique. Disregarding this difference, the standard error of the estimate is a measure of the variability among the estimates from all possible samples of the same size and design and, thus is a measure of the precision with which an estimate from a particular sample approximates the results of a complete enumeration.

The coefficient of variation (expressed as a percent) is the standard error of the estimate times 100 divided by the value being estimated. Note that the coefficients of variation are estimates derived from the sample and are also subject to sampling variability. Tables B-1 and B-2 give the estimates of coefficients of variation in percent for recent monthly dollar-volume sales and inventory estimates prepared by the Bureau of the Census and shown in this report.

The coefficients of variation presented in the tables permit certain confidence statements about the sample estimates. As noted before, the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about 2 out of 3 (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability tables. In about 9 out of 10 (90 percent) of these samples, the estimates would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than 1.65 times the percentage shown. In about 19 out of 20 (95

percent) of these samples, the estimates would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentage shown.

To illustrate the computations involved in the above confidence statements, as related to dollar volume sales estimates, assume that an estimate of sales published in table 1 is \$10,750 million for a particular month and that the median coefficient of variation for this estimate, as given in table B-1, is 1.8 percent, or 0.018. Multiplying \$10,750 million by 0.018 yields 194 million. Therefore, a 67-percent confidence interval is \$10,556 million to \$10,944 million (\$10,750 million plus or minus \$194 million). If corresponding confidence intervals were constructed for all possible samples of the same size and design, approximately 2 out of 3 (67 percent) of these intervals would contain the figure obtained from a complete enumeration. Typical practice is to construct 90- or 95-percent confidence intervals. Continuing with the illustration, a 90-percent confidence interval using $1.65 \times 0.018 \times 10,750$ million to yield 320 million). A 95-percent confidence interval is \$10,362 million to \$11,138 million (\$10,750 million plus or minus \$388 million).

All comparisons appearing on the front page of this publication and for which measures of sampling variability are available are accompanied by an indication of the 90-percent confidence interval. Thus, a statement such as "+.8 (+ or -1.3)" indicates a 90-percent confidence interval from -0.5 to +2.1. If the confidence interval contains zero, it is uncertain whether there is an increase or decrease.

Nonsampling Errors

As calculated for this report, the coefficient of variation measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimates and the true value being estimated. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources: (1) inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, (2) response errors, (3) definitional difficulties, (4) differences in the interpretation of questions, (5) mistakes in recording or coding the data obtained, and (6) other errors of collection, response, coverage, and estimation of missing data. These non-sampling errors also occur in complete censuses. Although no direct measures of the biases have been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and

tabulation of the data in an effort to minimize their influence. Coverage error has an effect on the accuracy of estimates for this survey to the extent that the administrative records system, which forms the basis of our survey universe frame, does not contain all legal businesses.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed sales amount to about 23 percent of the national sales estimates.

Table B-1. Estimated Coefficients of Variation in Percent for Retail Sales by Kinds of Business

[Based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, or trading-day differences]

SIC code	Kind of business	Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of two consecutive months ¹		Ratio to same month a year ago ²
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Median
	Retail sales, total	0.8-1.0	0.9	0.8-1.0	0.9	0.2-0.5	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.9-1.1	0.9	0.9-1.0	0.9	0.1-0.4	0.2	0.3
	Durable goods, total	1.0-1.4	1.2	1.1-1.4	1.2	0.5-0.8	0.5	0.8
52	Building materials group stores	2.7-3.7	3.1	2.9-3.5	3.1	0.4-1.4	0.9	1.3
521,3,5	Building materials, supply stores, hardware	3.3-4.2	3.4	3.3-4.0	3.5	0.4-1.2	0.7	1.2
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	3.2-4.3	3.3	3.3-4.0	3.4	0.5-1.3	0.8	1.2
523	Paint, glass, wallpaper stores*	3.6-5.6	4.7	3.6-5.8	5.0	1.2-3.1	1.6	3.3
525	Hardware stores	4.2-5.6	5.2	4.4-5.8	5.1	0.8-2.1	1.2	2.9
55 ex	Automotive dealers	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.5-1.8	1.7	0.6-1.2	0.8	1.2
554	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile							
551,2,5 6,7,9	dealers	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.8-1.9	1.8	0.7-1.4	0.9	1.4
551,2	Motor vehicle dealers	1.4-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.9	1.6	0.7-1.3	1.0	1.5
551	Motor vehicle dealers, (franch.)	1.4-1.8	1.6	1.5-1.9	1.6	0.7-1.3	0.9	1.6
553	Auto & home supply stores	2.9-4.1	3.7	2.7-3.9	3.3	0.7-1.2	0.8	2.4
57	Furniture group stores	1.4-2.1	1.5	1.3-1.6	1.4	0.4-1.3	0.6	1.1
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.9-4.6	3.3	3.0-3.5	3.1	0.8-2.9	1.1	1.7
5712	Furniture stores	3.4-5.7	4.3	3.8-4.6	4.0	0.8-1.8	1.0	2.0
5713	Floor covering stores	6.7-8.3	7.3	6.4-8.1	7.1	1.5-4.5	2.1	4.7
5722,31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer							
5722	stores	1.2-2.2	1.5	1.3-1.9	1.6	0.5-1.2	0.7	1.4
5731,34	Household appliance stores	3.8-4.7	4.2	3.8-4.5	4.3	0.6-1.7	1.3	2.7
5735,36	Radio, TV and computer stores	1.6-2.5	1.9	1.6-2.3	1.9	0.6-1.4	0.8	1.6
5941	Music stores*	7.6-11.6	8.8	7.7-10.7	9.1	1.3-2.7	1.8	3.2
5942	Sporting goods stores and bicycle shops	5.4-6.6	6.0	4.9-5.6	5.5	1.3-3.9	2.4	4.9
5942	Book stores	3.8-6.1	4.9	2.9-5.4	4.3	1.1-4.4	3.2	3.2
5944	Jewelry stores	4.5-6.3	4.9	4.3-5.3	4.6	1.2-4.9	1.7	2.8
5946	Camera, photographic supply stores*	7.0-8.3	7.9	6.0-8.0	7.0	1.5-4.3	2.5	4.1
5999 pt.	Optical goods stores*	3.5-4.8	3.9	3.5-4.2	4.0	0.8-1.5	1.1	3.6
	Nondurable goods, total	1.0-1.3	1.1	1.0-1.1	1.1	0.1-0.5	0.2	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores	0.1-0.2	0.1	0.1-0.2	0.1	0.0-0.1	0.1	0.1
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.) ³	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	Conventional department stores (including							
	leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	Discount department stores (including, leased							
	depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
531 pt.	National chain department stores (including,							
	leased depts.)	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0-0.0	0.0	0.0
533	Variety stores	1.9-2.7	2.4	1.9-2.7	2.4	0.2-1.2	0.6	1.2
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	0.6-0.8	0.7	0.5-0.7	0.7	0.1-0.4	0.3	0.4
54	Food group stores	1.2-1.4	1.2	1.2-1.3	1.3	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores	1.2-1.4	1.3	1.2-1.3	1.3	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.5
542	Meat, fish (seafood) markets	9.0-10.6	9.7	8.8-10.5	9.5	1.2-3.7	2.5	4.9
543	Fruit stores & vegetable markets*	10.4-14.3	12.3	9.9-12.7	11.5	1.2-7.5	3.3	5.7
544	Candy, nut, confectionery stores*	6.0-11.5	8.8	5.5-11.5	9.2	1.1-4.5	2.7	5.1
546	Retail bakeries	9.3-10.9	9.9	9.3-10.3	9.7	1.6-3.0	2.4	5.6
554	Gasoline service stations	2.0-2.4	2.2	2.1-2.4	2.2	0.2-0.4	0.3	0.8
56	Apparel & accessory stores	1.3-1.7	1.6	1.3-1.7	1.6	0.3-0.7	0.4	1.0
561	Men's & boys clothing, furnishings.	2.5-3.3	2.9	2.3-3.1	2.8	1.0-2.3	1.4	1.7
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	3.4-4.9	4.6	3.3-4.9	4.6	0.3-1.3	0.9	1.3
562	Women's ready to wear stores	3.9-5.5	5.1	3.9-5.4	5.2	0.3-1.3	1.0	1.4
565	Family clothing stores	1.3-2.3	1.7	1.3-1.9	1.7	0.4-1.1	0.6	1.3
566	Shoe stores	3.6-5.7	4.5	3.7-5.0	4.5	0.8-1.5	0.9	2.1
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1-6.2	5.5	5.2-5.7	5.4	0.5-1.2	0.7	1.6
5812	Eating places	5.4-6.6	5.8	5.5-6.0	5.7	0.5-1.3	0.7	1.7
5812 pt.	Restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias	9.9-11.7	10.2	9.8-10.6	10.2	0.6-2.0	1.1	2.5
5812 pt.	Refreshment places	4.0-5.2	4.5	4.1-4.7	4.3	0.6-1.4	0.9	2.5
5813	Drinking places (alcoholic bev)	3.5-4.1	4.0	3.0-3.9	3.7	0.9-2.5	1.0	2.2
591	Drug & proprietary stores	1.2-1.6	1.4	1.1-1.6	1.4	0.3-0.5	0.3	0.7
592	Liquor stores	2.6-3.5	2.8	2.4-3.0	2.7	0.4-2.1	1.0	1.8
5943	Stationery stores*	6.7-9.5	9.1	7.1-8.8	8.1	1.4-5.6	3.2	6.1
596	Nonstore retailers*	5.2-7.8	5.7	5.6-7.8	5.8	1.0-6.3	2.3	3.8
5961	Total mail order ⁵	8.7-10.2	9.1	8.5-10.7	9.7	1.0-8.6	3.0	4.4
598	Fuel dealers	5.5-6.7	6.0	5.5-6.7	6.2	1.0-3.1	1.6	2.5
5992	Florist shops*	9.7-15.7	10.2	9.6-14.9	10.7	1.3-5.9	3.3	6.1
53,56,	GAF, total⁶	0.6-0.8	0.7	0.6-0.8	0.7	0.2-0.4	0.2	0.4
57,594	Miscellaneous shopping goods stores	2.6-3.6	3.1	2.7-3.3	3.0	0.7-2.3	1.2	1.9

*See appendix A. Percent Change.

¹The ratio of the preliminary estimate for the current month over the final estimate for the previous month.²The ratio of the preliminary estimate to the final estimate for the same month one year ago.³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business total.⁴Includes establishments primarily selling merchandise through coin-operated vending machines, by house-to-house canvass or from mail-order.⁵The sales estimates for "total mail order", SIC 5961, are the sums of the "mail-order houses (department store merchandise)" and the "other mail-order," formerly published in the *Monthly Retail Trade Report*.⁶GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (see appendix A).

Note: The ranges and medians of the coefficients of variation shown above for the preliminary and final estimates and the ratio of change in sales are based on sales estimates for the six most recent data months.

Table B-2. **Estimated Coefficients of Variation in Percent for Inventories by Kinds of Business**

[Based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variations]

Sic code	Kind of business	Dollar volume inventory estimates	Ratio of 2 consecutive months	Ratio to same month a year ago ¹	SIC code	Kind of business	Dollar volume inventory estimates	Ratio of 2 consecutive months	Ratio to same month a year ago ¹
	Retail Inventories, total	1.2	0.2	0.6		Nondurable goods, total.	0.9	0.1	0.3
	Durable goods, total	2.3	0.3	0.9	53	General merchandise group stores.	0.6	0.0	0.4
52	Building materials group stores	3.1	0.3	1.1	531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.) .	0.4	0.0	0.1
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	2.2	0.4	1.1	54	Food group stores	1.3	0.2	0.5
57	Furniture group stores	1.8	0.4	0.9	56	Apparel & accessory stores	3.9	0.3	1.7

¹The ratio of the preliminary estimate to the final estimate for the same month one year ago.

Note: The coefficients of variation are based on inventories estimates for the six most recent data months.

MONTHLY REVISIONS TO ESTIMATES

Each month the Census Bureau issues three sets of estimates of retail sales: advance, preliminary, and final; two estimates of retail inventories—preliminary and final—are also issued. The Bureau releases “non-final” advance and preliminary data to provide government and private data users with much demanded early measures of consumer spending. However, a necessary part of the process of issuing these early data entails the resultant issuance of minor subsequent revisions. These revisions to the monthly sales and inventories estimates occur because the advance and preliminary estimates are released prior to the collection of all data eventually used in the calculation of the final monthly retail sales and inventories estimates.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau’s retail survey panels. Because of the early reporting and the sampling variability between the subsample and the full sample, the advance estimates will differ from the subsequent estimates for the same month. There are also

differences between the preliminary and final sales estimates because of the difference in the samples as described in the section, “Use of the Rotating Sample and Composite Estimate Procedures” and such nonsampling errors as indicated in Appendix B, “Reliability of Data.” The inventories estimates are also developed from rotating samples of respondents, i.e., most respondents are canvassed at 3 month intervals. Therefore, the differences between the preliminary and final inventories estimates for the same month are due to sampling and nonsampling errors.

For total retail sales, the range of the difference between the last 12 advance and final estimates for the same months was from –0.4 percent to +1.4 percent, with a median of +0.1 percent. The range of difference between preliminary and final estimates was from –0.2 percent to +0.2 percent, with a median of 0.0 percent. The preliminary-to-final difference for total retail inventories over the last 12 months ranged from –0.4 percent to +1.4 percent, with a median of 0.1 percent.

Table B-3. Seasonally Adjusted Advance, Preliminary, and Final Retail Sales Estimates

SIC code	Kind of business	December 1996 (millions of dollars)			Percent differences last 12 months					
		Advance	Preliminary	Final	Final/advance			Final/preliminary		
					Range		Median	Range		Median
					From	To		From	To	
	Retail sales, total	208,185	207,869	208,319	–0.4	1.4	0.1	–0.2	0.2	0.0
	Total (excl. automotive group)	157,299	156,773	157,218	–0.5	1.0	0.0	–0.3	0.4	0.0
	Durable goods, total	84,948	84,815	84,945	–0.6	2.3	0.4	–0.2	0.5	0.1
52	Building materials group stores	10,953	11,078	11,154	–2.9	4.9	0.7	–0.7	0.9	0.2
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	50,886	51,096	51,101	–1.6	2.9	0.6	–0.6	0.7	0.1
57	Furniture group stores	11,465	11,327	11,381	–1.9	2.0	0.3	–0.6	0.9	–0.1
	Nondurable goods, total	123,237	123,054	123,374	–0.6	0.9	0.0	–0.3	0.4	0.0
53	General merchandise group stores	26,022	26,102	26,235	–0.8	1.2	0.0	–0.4	0.7	0.0
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	20,364	20,580	20,713	–1.1	1.3	0.0	–0.4	0.8	0.0
54	Food stores	35,843	35,746	35,852	–0.6	0.8	0.0	–0.5	0.4	0.0
541	Grocery stores	33,979	33,849	33,935	–0.6	0.9	–0.1	–0.5	0.4	0.0
554	Gasoline service stations	13,329	13,334	13,461	–2.7	2.4	–0.2	–1.0	0.8	–0.3
56	Apparel & accessory stores	9,430	9,290	9,327	–1.2	3.7	0.1	–0.5	0.6	0.0
58	Eating and drinking places	19,906	20,184	20,104	–1.8	2.4	–0.3	–1.2	1.2	0.4
591	Drug & proprietary stores	7,702	7,675	7,663	–2.1	1.2	–0.1	–1.3	1.1	–0.2

Table B-4. Seasonally Adjusted Preliminary and Final Inventories Estimates

SIC code	Kind of business	December 1996 (millions of dollars)		Percent differences last 12 months (final/preliminary)		
		Preliminary	Final	Range		Median
				From	To	
	Retail sales, total	314,956	313,713	–0.4	1.4	–0.1
	Total (excl. automotive group)	226,192	225,500	–0.9	1.2	–0.1
	Durable goods, total	168,241	167,115	–0.7	1.3	0.1
52	Building materials group stores	22,464	22,446	–2.5	0.8	–0.1
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	88,764	88,213	–0.6	1.9	0.1
57	Furniture group stores	23,574	23,592	–4.1	1.2	0.0
	Nondurable goods, total	146,715	146,598	–0.9	1.5	–0.1
53	General merchandise group stores	58,180	58,147	–2.1	1.6	–0.1
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	47,398	47,316	–2.5	1.3	–0.1
54	Food stores	28,912	28,937	–0.5	0.9	0.1
56	Apparel & accessory stores	23,616	23,321	–1.2	1.9	–0.1

Appendix C.

Adjustment Factors for Seasonal and Other Variations

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been derived by the use of the X-11 ARIMA program developed by Statistics Canada. The program produces factors by using the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, Revised 1967. The forecasting options were not used as input to the X-11 ARIMA program. This adjustment program develops more accurate computations and diagnostics than the previously used program. Trading-day factors for adjusting retail sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustments could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in consumer buying patterns during holiday periods, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal, trading-day, and holiday patterns.

A description of trading-day adjustment factors may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Holiday adjustment factors were developed by a method similar to that described in *Seasonal Adjustment on Electronic Computers*, pp. 356-359, Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, 1961. Additional details concerning the adjustment factors may be obtained from the Chief, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233.

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary and advance estimates) as input to the X-11 program. When unadjusted advance, preliminary, and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the advance, (one month after the preliminary) preliminary, and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the advance and preliminary months.

Tables C-1 and C-2 present, by kind of business, the combined seasonal, trading-day, and holiday adjustment factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For kinds of business whose last observation is an advance estimate, two months of projected factors are shown. For all other kinds of business, three months of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

Table C-1. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Retail Inventories by Kinds of Business

SIC code	Kind of business	1995	1996												1997			
		Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
	Retail trade, total	0.984	0.971	0.983	0.998	1.001	0.996	0.984	0.968	0.975	1.003	1.062	1.077	0.984	0.971	0.983	0.997	1.000
	Durable goods, total	1.005	0.993	1.005	1.016	1.020	1.016	1.002	0.958	0.953	0.970	1.020	1.042	1.004	0.994	1.006	1.016	1.019
52	Building materials group stores	0.964	0.969	0.999	1.035	1.043	1.043	1.019	0.999	0.987	0.978	0.987	0.980	0.966	0.969	0.999	1.033	1.042
55 ex	Automotive dealers	1.034	1.025	1.039	1.049	1.046	1.041	1.020	0.942	0.914	0.924	0.967	1.006	1.033	1.027	1.041	1.049	1.043
554	Furniture group stores	1.007	0.974	0.958	0.967	0.968	0.964	0.965	0.954	0.983	1.031	1.107	1.141	1.003	0.973	0.954	0.964	0.968
57	Nondurable goods, total	0.962	0.949	0.961	0.980	0.981	0.974	0.963	0.979	0.998	1.039	1.106	1.116	0.962	0.949	0.960	0.978	0.979
53	General merchandise group stores	0.927	0.921	0.941	0.971	0.978	0.971	0.951	0.965	0.991	1.059	1.155	1.178	0.929	0.921	0.942	0.969	0.975
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	0.926	0.919	0.945	0.971	0.978	0.973	0.951	0.965	0.993	1.059	1.153	1.177	0.927	0.919	0.946	0.969	0.975
54	Food group stores	1.024	1.004	0.988	0.996	0.991	0.985	0.988	0.982	0.976	0.992	1.029	1.046	1.025	1.004	0.988	0.996	0.990
56	Apparel & accessory stores	0.916	0.891	0.941	0.980	0.984	0.967	0.953	1.001	1.036	1.069	1.136	1.135	0.910	0.891	0.942	0.979	0.983

Note: Data are adjusted for seasonal variations. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Preliminary and Final (one month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Preliminary month. Adjustment factors are not included in this table for kinds of business that are not published separately. Adjusted inventory data are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for corresponding kinds of business. Adjusted data for the summary trade totals are obtained by summarizing the adjusted data for the individual kinds of business. The options used to derive factors for each kind of business were selected during the last benchmarking operation and will not be subject to modification until the next benchmarking operation. These options are available upon request.

Table C-2. Combined Seasonal, Trading-Day, and Holiday Adjustment Factors for U.S. Retail Sales

SIC code	Kind of business	1995	1996												1997			
		Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
	Retail sales, total ..	1.195	0.876	0.896	0.990	0.979	1.048	1.008	1.006	1.045	0.957	1.011	1.022	1.183	0.886	0.861	0.984	0.984
	Durable goods, total ...	1.075	0.861	0.899	0.997	1.019	1.086	1.042	1.040	1.060	0.966	1.018	0.967	1.078	0.867	0.859	0.996	1.017
52	Building materials group stores	0.898	0.772	0.778	0.918	1.086	1.196	1.115	1.106	1.091	1.021	1.088	0.968	0.910	0.765	0.743	0.917	1.074
521,3	Building materials, supply stores	0.873	0.795	0.798	0.928	1.063	1.148	1.094	1.117	1.101	1.033	1.107	0.976	0.890	0.790	0.760	0.923	1.048
525	Hardware stores	1.068	0.839	0.782	0.922	1.042	1.162	1.120	1.069	1.050	0.955	1.023	1.029	1.047	0.838	0.752	0.922	1.035
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	0.868	0.882	0.940	1.049	1.057	1.117	1.069	1.069	1.072	0.973	1.022	0.914	0.870	0.892	0.899	1.044	1.059
551,2, 5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automobile dealers	0.865	0.882	0.943	1.055	1.059	1.122	1.071	1.067	1.069	0.972	1.018	0.910	0.865	0.893	0.903	1.049	1.061
553	Auto & Home supply stores	0.927	0.884	0.878	0.986	1.023	1.057	1.049	1.082	1.088	0.993	1.061	0.997	0.931	0.889	0.843	0.981	1.027
57	Furniture group stores ...	1.412	0.929	0.891	0.955	0.910	0.954	0.949	0.960	1.010	0.953	1.000	1.118	1.410	0.928	0.856	0.951	0.917
571	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.202	0.907	0.878	0.966	0.943	0.995	0.973	1.003	1.042	0.980	1.037	1.132	1.195	0.909	0.841	0.960	0.942
5722, 31,34	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores ..	1.578	0.960	0.894	0.947	0.879	0.916	0.926	0.922	0.979	0.929	0.975	1.117	1.583	0.958	0.862	0.945	0.888
	Nondurable goods, total	1.273	0.886	0.896	0.977	0.959	1.022	0.986	0.985	1.038	0.949	1.006	1.060	1.254	0.899	0.862	0.978	0.956
53	General merchandise group stores	1.719	0.742	0.810	0.912	0.907	0.989	0.956	0.910	1.009	0.911	0.986	1.186	1.691	0.760	0.779	0.921	0.899
531	Dept. stores (excl. leased depts.)	1.756	0.729	0.797	0.913	0.904	0.981	0.949	0.901	1.011	0.910	0.981	1.201	1.729	0.746	0.766	0.920	0.899
531	Dept. stores (incl. leased depts.)	1.753	0.731	0.793	0.927	0.904	0.982	0.948	0.901	1.012	0.909	0.982	1.203	1.731	0.749	0.759	0.922	0.899
533	Variety stores	1.769	0.713	0.832	0.911	0.940	1.026	0.938	0.903	1.000	0.899	1.004	1.118	1.731	0.748	0.782	0.944	0.896
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	1.563	0.806	0.836	0.916	0.906	1.009	0.990	0.942	0.997	0.909	1.006	1.134	1.549	0.821	0.800	0.919	0.914
54	Food group stores	1.093	0.964	0.939	1.004	0.969	1.040	1.008	1.027	1.044	0.958	0.995	1.008	1.063	0.982	0.903	1.002	0.968
541	Grocery stores	1.080	0.968	0.940	1.005	0.969	1.041	1.010	1.029	1.046	0.958	0.994	1.008	1.049	0.986	0.904	1.003	0.969
554	Gasoline service stations ..	0.980	0.929	0.908	0.972	0.981	1.052	1.045	1.068	1.082	0.993	1.022	0.980	0.981	0.931	0.876	0.971	0.987
56	Apparel & accessory stores	1.644	0.707	0.776	0.946	0.952	0.986	0.940	0.911	1.093	0.946	1.007	1.157	1.604	0.720	0.743	0.974	0.915
561	Mens & boys clothing, furnishings,	1.889	0.816	0.797	0.896	0.916	0.967	0.971	0.828	0.937	0.902	0.986	1.155	1.874	0.831	0.766	0.913	0.881
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores	1.618	0.703	0.782	0.962	0.973	1.037	0.961	0.895	1.014	0.949	1.017	1.122	1.594	0.710	0.754	0.988	0.953
566	Shoe stores	1.314	0.718	0.795	0.989	1.022	1.038	0.989	0.959	1.252	0.973	0.956	1.036	1.278	0.728	0.756	1.050	0.962
58	Eating and drinking places	1.013	0.900	0.924	1.018	0.991	1.052	1.040	1.048	1.088	0.983	1.014	0.976	0.992	0.912	0.890	1.002	0.996
591	Drug & proprietary stores ...	1.234	0.983	0.972	1.005	0.991	1.024	0.960	0.975	0.986	0.931	0.990	0.978	1.231	0.990	0.937	1.020	0.973
592	Liquor stores	1.376	0.869	0.863	0.949	0.934	1.015	1.006	1.044	1.053	0.935	0.978	1.044	1.325	0.882	0.829	0.949	0.918
53,56, 57,594	GAF, total	1.706	0.773	0.813	0.919	0.907	0.975	0.942	0.919	1.025	0.918	0.985	1.161	1.682	0.784	0.779	0.928	0.898

Note: Data are adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Each month, new factors are developed using the latest estimates and applied to the unadjusted Advance (the month after the Preliminary estimate, but not available in this publication), Preliminary, and Final (the month before the Preliminary estimate) estimates and to the estimates of the previous year that correspond to the Advance and Preliminary months. The sales adjustment factors are not included in this table for those kinds of business for which adjusted data are not published separately. Adjusted sales data are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for corresponding kinds of business. Adjusted data for the summary trade totals are obtained by summarizing the adjusted data for the individual kinds of business. The options used to derive factors for each kind of business were selected during the last benchmarking operation and will not be subject to modification until the next benchmarking operation. These options are available upon request.

Appendix D.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Retail trade SIC Major Groups 52-59, includes establishments primarily engaged in selling merchandise for personal or household consumption and rendering services incidental to the sale of goods.

The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications defined in the 1987 edition of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) manual. Descriptions of each kind of business follow. Data for some kinds of business are not shown separately but are included in the major group of other totals.

DURABLE GOODS

Building Materials, Hardware, Garden Supply, and Mobile Home Dealers (SIC Major Group 52). This major group includes retail establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and other building materials; paint, glass, and wallpaper; hardware; nursery stock; lawn and garden supplies; and mobile homes. It includes lumber and other building materials dealers and paint, glass, and wallpaper stores selling to the general public, even if sales to contractors account for a larger proportion of total sales. These establishments are known as “retail” in the trade. Establishments primarily selling these products but not selling to the general public are classified in wholesale trade.

Lumber and Other Building Materials Dealers (SIC 521).¹ Establishments engaged in selling primarily lumber, or lumber and a general line of building materials, to the general public. The lumber which they sell may include rough and dressed lumber, flooring, molding, doors, sashes, frames, and other millwork. The building materials may include roofing, siding, shingles, wallboard, paint, brick, tile, cement, sand, gravel, and other building materials and supplies. Hardware is often an important line of retail lumber and building materials dealers. Establishments known as “home centers” are included here.

Paint, Glass, and Wallpaper Stores (SIC 523).¹ Establishments engaged in selling primarily paint, glass, and wallpaper, or any combination of these lines, to the general public.

¹Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group totals.

Hardware Stores (SIC 525). Establishments primarily selling a number of basic hardware lines such as tools, builders' hardware, paint and glass, housewares and household appliances, cutlery, and roofing materials, no one of which accounts for 50 percent or more of the sales of the establishments.

Retail Nurseries, Lawn and Garden Supply Stores (SIC 526).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in selling trees, shrubs, other plants, seeds, bulbs, mulches, soil conditioners, fertilizers, pesticides, garden tools, and other garden supplies to the general public. These establishments primarily sell products purchased from others, but may sell some plants which they grow themselves.

Mobile Home Dealers (SIC 527).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used mobile homes, including parts and accessories.

Automotive Dealers (SIC Major Group 55, ex. 554)

This major group includes retail dealers selling new and used automobiles, boats, recreational trailers, and motorcycles; and those selling new automobile parts and accessories. Automobile repair shops maintained by the establishments engaged in the sale of new automobiles are also included.

Motor Vehicle Dealers (Franchised)—New and Used (SIC 551). Establishments primarily engaged in the sale of new automobiles or new and used foreign or domestic automobiles. These establishments frequently maintain repair departments and used car lots and carry stocks of replacement parts, tires, batteries, and automotive accessories. Used car lots and repair departments operated by franchised new passenger car dealers are not considered separate locations.

Motor Vehicle Dealers (Nonfranchised)—Used Cars Only (SIC 552).¹ Establishments primarily selling used cars and not holding a franchise for the sale of new cars.

Auto and Home Supply Stores (SIC 553). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of automobile tires, batteries, and other automobile parts and accessories. These establishments frequently sell additional lines of merchandise such as household appliances, radios and television sets, sporting goods, housewares, and hardware.

Boat Dealers (SIC 555).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used motorboats and other watercraft, including parts, accessories, marine supplies, and outboard motors.

Recreational Vehicle Dealers (SIC 556).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used recreational trailers, campers (pickup coaches), and other trailers for passenger automobiles, and motor homes, including parts and accessories.

Motorcycle Dealers (SIC 557).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used motorcycles and motor scooters, including parts and accessories.

Automotive Dealers, Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 559).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of new and used automotive vehicles, such as snowmobiles, dunebuggies, go-carts, aircraft, utility trailers, and new automotive equipment and supplies, not elsewhere classified.

Furniture, Home Furnishings, and Equipment Stores (SIC Major Group 57)

This major group includes retail stores selling goods used for furnishing the home, such as furniture, floor coverings, draperies, glass and chinaware, domestic stoves, refrigerators, and other household electrical and gas appliances.

Furniture Stores (SIC 5712). Establishments primarily selling household furniture, beds, mattresses, springs, and other sleep equipment. Also included in this classification are establishments selling household appliances, phonographs, radio and TV sets, and floor coverings, provided the receipts from sales of furniture and sleep equipment exceed those from sales of other merchandise.

Floor Coverings Stores (SIC 5713). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of floor coverings and related products.

Drapery, Curtain, and Upholstery Stores (SIC 5714).¹ Establishments primarily selling draperies, curtains, slipcovers, and upholstery materials. Establishments primarily selling custom made draperies and slipcovers for household use also are included.

Miscellaneous Home Furnishing Stores (SIC 5719).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of miscellaneous home furnishings, such as china, glassware, and metalware for kitchen and table use, bedding and linen, brooms, brushes, lamps and shades, mirrors and pictures, venetian blinds, window shades, and fireplace accessories.

Household Appliance Stores (SIC 5722). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of electric and gas refrigerators, stoves, and other household appliances, such as electric irons, percolators, hot plates, and vacuum cleaners. Many such stores also sell radio and television sets. Retail stores operated by public utility companies and primarily engaged in the sale of electric and gas appliances for household use are classified here.

Radio, Television, and Electronics Stores (SIC 5731). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale and installation of radios, television sets, record players, high fidelity (hi-fi), sound reproducing equipment and home computers. Such establishments also may sell additional lines, such as household appliances, musical instruments, or records.

Computer and Computer Software Stores (SIC 5734). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of computers, computer peripheral equipment, and software.

Music Stores (SIC 5735 + 5736).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of musical instruments, phonograph records and albums, sheet music, and similar musical supplies.

Miscellaneous Durable Goods Stores (SIC Major Group 59 part)

This includes all retail durable goods stores not elsewhere classified.

Used Merchandise Stores (SIC 593).² This industry includes stores primarily engaged in the retail sale of used merchandise, antiques, and secondhand goods such as clothing and shoes; furniture; books and rare manuscripts; musical instruments; office furniture, phonographs and phonograph records; and store fixtures and equipment. This industry also includes pawnshops.

Sporting Goods Stores and Bicycle Shops (SIC 5941). Establishments primarily selling a general or a specialized line of sporting goods and equipment for hunting, camping, fishing, skiing, riding, tennis, golf, and other sports; bicycles, bicycle parts and accessories; and gymnasium and playground equipment.

Book Stores (SIC 5942). Establishments primarily selling new books and periodicals. Stationery and related items may also be sold.

Jewelry Stores (SIC 5944). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of any combination of the lines of jewelry, such as diamonds and other precious stones; rings, bracelets, and brooches; sterling and plated silverware; and watches and clocks.

²Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the durable goods stores total.

Hobby, Toy, and Game Shops (SIC 5945).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of toys, games, and hobby kits and supplies.

Camera and Photographic Supply Stores (SIC 5946).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cameras, film, and other photographic supplies and equipment. Excluded are establishments primarily engaged in finishing films.

Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Shops (SIC 5947).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of combined lines of gifts and novelty merchandise, souvenirs, and miscellaneous small art goods such as greeting cards and holiday decorations.

Luggage and Leather Goods Stores (SIC 5948).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of luggage, trunks, and leather goods.

Optical Goods Stores (SIC 5995).² Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of eyeglasses and related optical goods. Excluded are establishments whose receipts are primarily from examining eyes and prescribing eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Miscellaneous Retail Stores Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 5999).² Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized lines of merchandise such as collectors' items and supplies, artists' supplies, orthopedic and artificial limbs, drafting materials, typewriters, telephones, pets, religious goods, hearing aids, rubber stamps, monuments and tombstones, and other merchandise not elsewhere classified.

NONDURABLE GOODS

General Merchandise Group Stores (SIC Major Group 53)

This major group includes retail stores which sell a number of lines of merchandise, such as dry goods, apparel and accessories, furniture and home furnishings, small wares, hardware, and food. The stores included in this group are known as department stores, variety stores, general merchandise stores, general stores, etc.

Department Stores (SIC 531). Establishments normally employing 50 people or more, having sales of apparel and soft goods combined amounting to 20 percent or more of total sales, and selling each of the following lines of merchandise:

1. Furniture, home furnishings, appliances, and radio and TV sets.
2. A general line of apparel for the family.
3. Household linens and dry goods.

To qualify as a department store, sales of each of the lines listed above must be less than 80 percent of total store sales. An establishment with total sales of \$10 million or more is classified as a department store even if sales of one of the merchandise lines listed above exceed the maximum percent of total sales, provided that the combined sales of the other two groups are \$1 million or more. Department store sales have been separately presented for the following classifications:

Department stores (incl. leased depts.), and
Department stores (excl. leased depts.).

Department stores (incl. leased depts.) are also sub-categorized as shown below:

Conventional Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and:

1. Usually provide check-out service and customer assistance (salespersons) within each department.
2. May have a catalog order desk.
3. Are not affiliated with a company which operates similar establishments on a national basis.

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods and hard goods which are primarily nationally advertised brands.
2. Appliances which are serviced by another company.
3. Limited lines of merchandise through seasonal or special catalogs.

Discount or Mass Merchandising Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and usually:

1. Convey the image of a high-volume, fast turnover outlet selling a variety of merchandise for less than conventional prices.
2. Provide centralized check-out service.
3. Do not provide customer assistance within store departments. Merchandise is normally sold through self-service with minimal assistance provided in any department.
4. Do not have a catalog order desk.

³Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: miscellaneous shopping goods stores (594).

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods which are usually their own corporate brands or are unbranded.
2. Hard goods which are primarily nationally advertised brands.
3. Appliances which are serviced by another company.

National Chain Department Stores (SIC 531 part). Establishments which satisfy the criteria of a department store and:

1. Usually provide check-out service and customer assistance (salespersons) within each department.
2. May have a catalog order desk.
3. Are affiliated with a company which operates similar establishments on a national basis.

These stores often sell:

1. Soft goods and hard goods which are their own corporate brands or are unbranded.
2. Appliances which are serviced by their own company.

Variety Stores (SIC 533). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a variety of merchandise in the low and popular price ranges. Sales usually are made on a cash-and-carry basis with the open selling method of display and customer selection of merchandise. These stores generally do not carry a complete line of merchandise, are not departmentalized, do not carry their own charge service, and do not deliver merchandise.

Miscellaneous General Merchandise Stores (SIC 539). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a general line of apparel, dry goods, hardware, homewares or home furnishings, groceries, and other lines in limited amounts. Stores selling commodities covered in the definition for department stores, but normally having less than 50 employees, and stores usually known as catalog showrooms, country general stores, or warehouse clubs are included here. Also included in this classification are establishments whose sales of apparel or of furniture and home furnishings exceed half of their total sales providing that sales of the smaller of the two lines in combination with dry goods and household linens account for 20 percent or more of total sales.

Food Stores (SIC Major Group 54)

This major group includes retail stores primarily engaged in selling food for home preparation and consumption.

Grocery Stores (SIC 541). Establishments primarily selling (1) a wide variety of canned or frozen foods, such as vegetables, fruits, and soups; (2) dry groceries, either packaged or in bulk, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, spices, sugar, flour, and crackers; and (3) other processed foods and nonedible grocery items. In addition, these establishments often sell smoked and prepared meats, fresh fish and poultry, fresh vegetables and fruits, and fresh or frozen meats.

Establishments commonly known as supermarkets, food stores, convenience stores, and delicatessens are included in this classification if receipts from sales of groceries and food items for off-premise preparation and consumption are 50 percent or more of total sales.

Meat and Fish (Seafood) Markets, Including Freezer Provisioners (SIC 542). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of fresh, frozen, or cured meats, fish, shellfish, and other seafood. Frequently these establishments also sell poultry, dairy products, eggs, some groceries, and items commonly used in preparing seafood or consumed with seafood.

Fruit Stores and Vegetable Markets (SIC 543).¹ Establishments primarily selling fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. These establishments frequently carry a limited line of grocery items. Roadside stands of farmers selling only their own produce are not included.

Candy, Nut, and Confectionery Stores (SIC 544).¹ Establishments primarily selling candy, nuts, sweetmeats, and other confections. A soda fountain or lunch counter is frequently operated in these stores. Also included are candy and popcorn stands located in motion picture theaters.

Dairy Products Stores (SIC 545).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of dairy products, such as milk, cream, butter, cheese, and related products, to over-the-counter customers.

Retail Bakeries (SIC 546). Establishments primarily engaged in the over-the-counter retail sale of bakery products such as bread, cakes, pies, or cookies, all or some of which may be baked on the premises.

Other Miscellaneous Food Stores (SIC 549).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized foods, not elsewhere classified, such as eggs and poultry, health foods, spices, herbs, coffee, and tea. The poultry stores may sell live poultry, slaughter and clean poultry for their own account and sell dressed fowls, or sell fowl cleaned and dressed by others.

Gasoline Service Stations (SIC 554)

Establishments primarily selling gasoline and automotive lubricants. Usually these establishments also sell tires, batteries, and accessories, and perform minor repair work

and services. Establishments called garages but deriving more than half of their receipts from the sale of gasoline and automotive lubricants and establishments known as truck stops which are primarily engaged in selling diesel fuel to truckers are also included. Convenience food stores deriving more than 50 percent of their sales from the sale of gasoline are classified as gasoline service stations.

Apparel and Accessory Stores (SIC Major Group 56)

Establishments in this major group are primarily engaged in selling clothing of all kinds and related articles for personal wear and adornment.

Men's and Boys' Clothing and Furnishings Stores (SIC 561). Establishments primarily selling men's and boys' ready-to-wear clothing and furnishings.

Women's Ready-to-Wear Stores (SIC 562). Establishments primarily selling women's and girls' ready-to-wear apparel.

Women's Accessory and Specialty Stores (SIC 563).¹ Establishments primarily selling a specialized line of women's and girls' apparel, such as furs, sportswear, beachwear, blouses, hosiery, millinery, foundation garments, lingerie, robes, and other intimate wear.

Children's and Infants' Wear Stores (SIC 564).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of children's and infants' clothing, furnishings, and accessories. Such establishments may specialize in either children's or infants' wear or they may sell a combination of children's and infants' wear.

Family Clothing Stores (SIC 565). Establishments primarily selling clothing, furnishings, and accessories for men, women, and children, without specializing in any one line.

Shoe Stores (SIC 566). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of any one line, or a combination of the lines, of men's, women's, and children's footwear. These establishments frequently carry accessory lines such as hosiery, gloves, and handbags.

Miscellaneous Apparel and Accessory Stores (SIC 569).¹ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of specialized lines of apparel and accessories not elsewhere classified, such as uniforms, bathing suits, raincoats, riding apparel, sports apparel, umbrellas, wigs, and toupees. This industry also includes custom tailors primarily engaged in making and selling men's and women's clothing (except fur apparel SIC 568) to individual order.

Eating and Drinking Places (SIC Major Group 58)

Establishments in this major group are primarily engaged in selling prepared foods and drinks for consumption on or near the premises and lunch counters and refreshment stands selling prepared foods and drinks for immediate consumption.

Restaurants, Lunchrooms, Cafeterias, and Contract Feeding (SIC 5812 part)

*Restaurants and Lunchrooms.*⁴ Establishments engaged in serving prepared food and beverages selected by the patron from a full menu. Waiter or waitress service is provided and the establishment has seating facilities for at least 15 patrons. These establishments often serve alcoholic beverages, but receipts from the sale of alcoholic beverages may not exceed the receipts from prepared food.

*Cafeterias.*⁴ Establishments engaged in serving prepared food and beverages primarily through the use of a cafeteria line where customers serve themselves from displayed selections. Some limited waiter or waitress service may be provided. Table and/or booth seating facilities are usually provided.

*Contract Feeding.*⁴ Establishments primarily engaged in providing food service under contract to another company; hospital; or governmental, penal, or educational institution. The facilities and personnel of these establishments may be provided by the contracting company, institutions, etc., however, the management is always supplied by the contractor.

Social Caterers (SIC 5812 part).⁵ Establishments primarily engaged in serving prepared food and beverages for weddings, banquets, etc., on the premises or elsewhere. Such establishments also may arrange for some entertainment but this should be a minor part of the business.

Refreshment Places, Ice Cream, and Frozen Custard Stands, (SIC 5812 part).

*Refreshment Places.*⁶ Establishments primarily selling limited lines of refreshments and prepared food items. Included in this group are establishments which prepare refreshment items such as pizza, barbecued chicken, and hamburgers for consumption either on or near the premises or for take-home consumption.

⁴Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Restaurants, Lunchrooms, Cafeterias.

⁵Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Eating Places (SIC 5812).

⁶Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Refreshment Places (SIC 5812 pt.).

*Ice Cream and Frozen Custard Stands.*⁶ Establishments primarily engaged in selling ice cream, frozen custard, or other frozen ices for consumption either on or near the premises. Take-home packages also may be provided for ice cream sold in bulk.

Drinking Places (SIC 5813). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of drinks such as beer, ale, wine, liquor, and other alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises. Prepared foods are frequently sold at these establishments, but receipts from the sale of prepared foods may not exceed receipts from sales of alcoholic beverages.

Drug Stores and Proprietary Stores (SIC 591)

Establishments engaged in the retail sale of prescription drugs and patent medicines and which may carry a number of related lines such as cosmetics, toiletries, tobacco, and novelty merchandise. Included are drug stores which also have a soda fountain or lunch counter. These stores are included on the basis of their usual trade designation rather than on the more strict interpretation of commodities handled.

Liquor Stores (SIC 592)

Establishments primarily selling packaged alcoholic beverages, such as ale, beer, wine, and whiskey, for consumption off the premises. Liquor stores operated by States, counties, and municipalities are included.

Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Stores (SIC Major Group 59, part)

This includes all retail nondurable goods stores not elsewhere classified.

Miscellaneous Shopping Goods Stores (SIC 594)

Establishments engaged in the retail sale of one or more lines of merchandise similar to that found in department stores.

Stationery Stores (SIC 5943).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of stationery, such as paper and paper products (including printing and engraving), post cards, novelties, and school and office supplies (excluding office furniture and machines).

Sewing, Needlework, and Piece Goods Stores (SIC 5949).³ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of piece goods, notions, sewing and knitting supplies, fabrics, patterns, and other needlework accessories.

Mail-Order Houses (Department Store Merchandise) (SIC 5961 part). Establishments with normally 50 or more employees primarily engaged in the retail sale by catalog and mail order of a general line of merchandise similar to that sold by department stores.

Other Mail-Order Houses (SIC 5961 part). Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a specialized or limited line of merchandise such as food, automotive merchandise, apparel, books, stationery, etc., by catalog and mail order.

Automatic Merchandising Machine Operators (SIC 5962).⁷ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of products by means of automatic merchandising units (vending machines) which are generally located on the premises of other businesses. Those products include candy, nut, and confectionery; milk and ice cream; other beverages; and tobacco products.

Direct Selling Establishments (SIC 5963).⁷ Establishments primarily selling merchandise by house-to-house canvass, by party plan, by telephone, or from a truck. The merchandise includes building materials, hardware, and garden supplies; general merchandise, milk; other foods; apparel and accessories; furniture, home furnishings, and equipment; mobile food service; and books and stationery.

Fuel Oil Dealers (SIC 5983).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of fuel oil.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Dealers (SIC 5984).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of liquefied petroleum (LP) gas (bottled gas or in bulk.)

Fuel Dealers, Not Elsewhere Classified (SIC 5989).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of coal, coke, charcoal, wood, or any combination of these lines.

Florists (SIC 5992).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cut flowers and growing plants. Greenhouses and nurseries are included if receipts are primarily from the sale of products not grown on the premises.

Cigar Stores and Stands (SIC 5993).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, and smokers' supplies. Many of the establishments included in this classification are operated as concessions in places of amusement, railway stations, airports, and other public places.

News Dealers and Newsstands (SIC 5994).⁸ Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals.

⁷Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the larger group: Nonstore Retailers (SIC 596).

⁸Data for this kind of business are not shown separately but are included in the nondurable goods stores total.

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You can obtain Retail data from table 1 of this report.

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